Poland's Party • Dorothy Day's Spirit • Califano's Spleen

Abraham Brumberg *Robert Coles* *Laurence Lynn*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Scientific Imperialism

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

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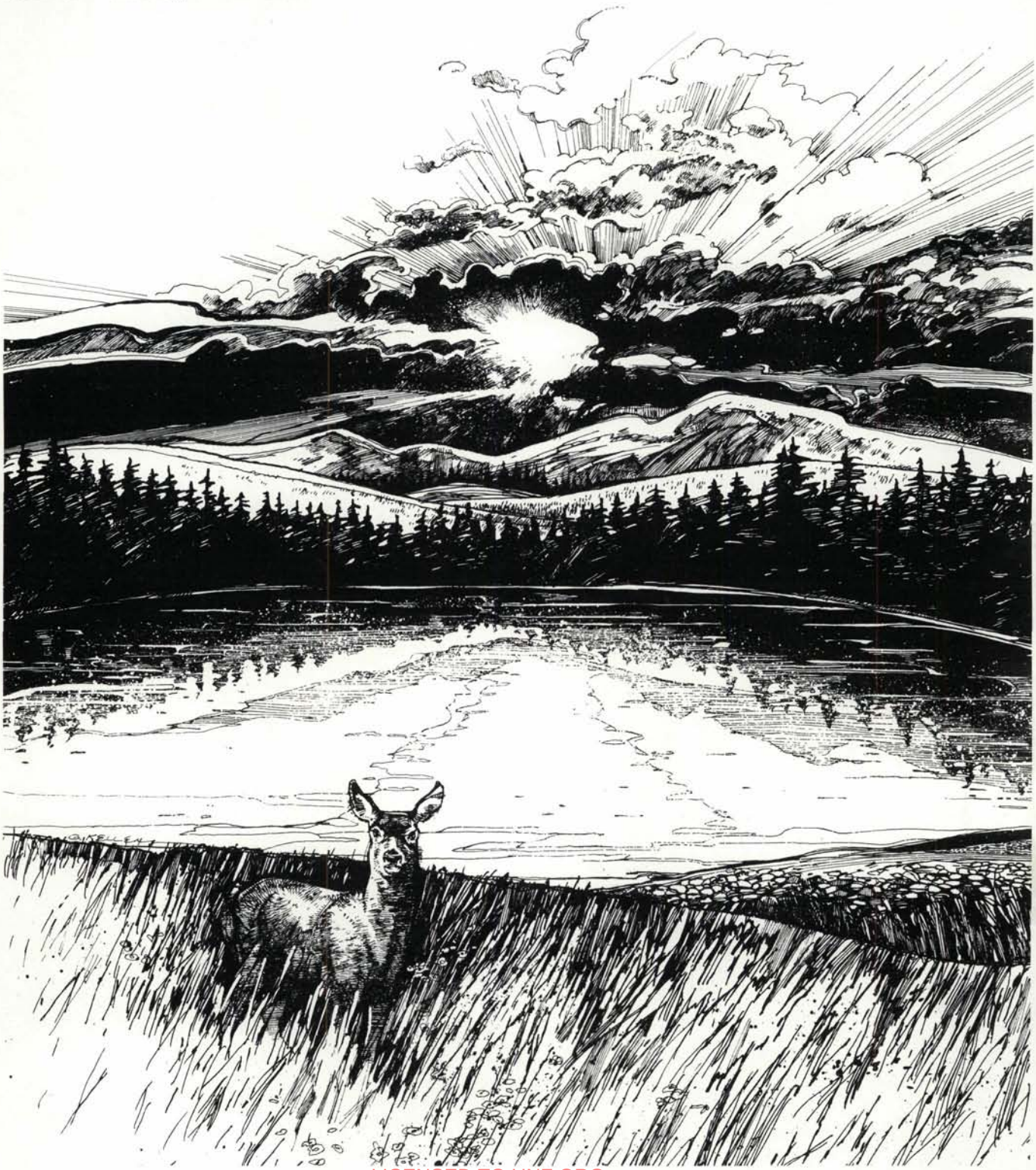

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TRB

from Washington
June 6, 1981

Explosive Vices

The common way of measuring explosions is on a scale using TNT. A couple of pounds of TNT used to be considered quite a blast. Then came the Hiroshima bomb, which was the equivalent of tons of TNT; it was 20,000 tons, mushroom cloud and all, and it flattened a city. Now we have fusion bombs. They come in various shapes and sizes. The biggest are 500 times more powerful than the antiquated Hiroshima bomb, equaling 10 million tons of TNT. One of these explodes and pouf—out goes the city and the suburbs and 50 miles around it and God knows what else. We don't like to think about it, so we don't, and that's one of our problems. To make it easier we have coined the diminutive phrase "megatons" (million tons) and talk familiarly of 10 MTs. Nobody understands it; it's metaphysical. But we have lots of these nuclear warheads and we are building more all the time. So is Russia. For what? That's the question. But anybody who asks the question is considered stupid, or maybe subversive.

The difficulty is that the question has gotten into politics around the world. Over in Japan the friendly Suzuki government is threatened, in part, because of the fear that US naval vessels have nuclear weapons aboard when they make routine visits. In Europe, West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt threatened to resign if left-wingers didn't stop pestering him about the NATO agreement to deploy US tactical nuclear weapons, which are to counter the nuclear weapons that the Soviets have deployed. He came to Washington to urge Reagan to start renegotiating with Moscow. The question is causing trouble in France, and in Holland, and in Britain. The Reagan administration is angry that so many people are asking "why" in connection with the bomb, and complains that a wave of pacifism is sweeping Europe. People are thinking the unthinkable.

So let's take another look at the bomb; let's take a small one-MT weapon, which is the equivalent of only one million tons of TNT. It will create a fireball some 7,000 feet in diameter; it will heat a million tons of air above 2,000 degrees centigrade; it will dig a crater, if exploded near the ground, nearly one-fifth of a mile in diameter and 300 feet deep. If this cozy, scaled-down model is exploded in an urban area, approximately 50 square miles will be devastated by the blast. The thermal radiation will set fires over a 150-square mile area and cause second-degree burns over 250 square miles. It also will bounce a lot of radioactive debris into the air that will take days to settle.

I won't go into further details, which have been outlined by physicist Henry Kendall of MIT and put in the *Congressional Record* by Senator Kennedy. But it is interesting to guess about some of the side-effects. The world's largest known natural explosion was in 1883—the volcano Krakatau in Indonesia—but we can surpass that today; like the volcano, the big MT bombs could hoist several cubic miles of debris into the atmosphere and leave the impalpable material up there for years. That would shut off some of the sun's rays with either a cooling or a heating effect—nobody seems sure which it would be. The National Academy of Sciences rather casually says that one degree of cooling would "eliminate wheat growing in Canada." Maybe this is an exaggeration but a few explosions might alter the normal weather patterns of the earth. A change in the monsoon in India would affect half a billion people.

The world aches for Ronald Reagan to do something about this idiotic confrontation. Most Americans agree that US defenses should be strengthened but, at the same time, that arms control negotiations should go on. So do our allies. Nobody has put this better than George F. Kennan, veteran diplomat and student of Russia. The superpowers are "on a collision course," he said last month in almost despairing tones; "communication between them seems almost to have broken down." We are building a "type and volume of weaponry which could not possibly be used without utter disaster," he said, urging an immediate cutback on weapons. Fresh from studying Kendall's statistics, I couldn't disagree. NATO countries have around 19,000 nuclear warheads, Warsaw Pact countries perhaps 12,000. Kendall figures there aren't enough cities to go around for targets. After the cities go, what next? "There would then arise the strong possibility that mankind, and indeed all life, could no longer continue as it always has."

The Soviets share the blame but it is the US that first exploded the devilish device, that developed the hydrogen bomb, that invented the multiple warhead, Kennan continues. And now he looks about Washington with wonder and alarm. Even with its present capacity for a million Hiroshimas, the US is scheduled to produce 17,000 additional nuclear weapons in the 1980s. "Not for 30 years," he says, "has the political tension reached so dangerous a point as it has today." And he adds, "The most serious danger of all is that fear and hysteria in Washington could breed the same in Moscow's fertile ground with the devastating consequences of a self-fulfilling prophecy."

These are chilling words. I waited for President Reagan's speech last week at West Point, at one point said to be on foreign affairs, with deepest interest. What with Helmut Schmidt's visit and all the other problems, how would he respond? Alas, it was one of the most banal presidential speeches of modern times. Let us make allowances. Reagan is the victim of an attempt on his life and is not yet back at work full-time; he is working on domestic issues; he is striking a bipartisan pose. But nevertheless we deserve better in a half-hour address. He is high on patriotism and the martial drum beat: soldiers should be paid more; George Washington and Samuel Johnson and Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu said apt things. The "shrill voices" that attack the military are "false." But what about arms negotiations? It seems that a "good friend" of his recently wrote a book with the significant title, *The Treaty Trap*, warning big nations to beware of treaties. "This is not to say," he adds reassuringly, "that we shouldn't seek treaties and understandings and even mutual reductions of strategic weapons." But we must keep up our arms, too, he adds. So he dismisses the matter. . . . The MTs continue to pile up.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

June 6, 1981

Right to Strife

Italians voted by more than a two-to-one margin to reject repeal of that nation's liberal abortion law even though Italy's right-to-life movement is headed by none other than the pope himself. It's safe to say that a referendum in this country would produce similar results. Gallup found last year that the public opposes a ban on all abortions by a margin of 67 to 33 percent. A CBS-*New York Times* poll this year indicated that 63 percent of the people believe a woman ought to be able to get an abortion if she wants one and if her doctor agrees. Only 25 percent think she should be barred and the rest are undecided. The right-to-life movement in America is spearheaded, politically at least, by such unpontifical types as Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois and Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Yet there is real danger of this zealous minority imposing its will on the majority.

We would be the last to say that just because a majority favors something, it's automatically right. But abortion is a special issue. It is intensely personal, affecting primarily the lives of a prospective mother and her unborn child. And the issue has at its heart an objectively and scientifically (see "Science ex machina," by Charles Krauthammer, page 19) unanswerable question: when does human life actually begin? Politicians ought to quake before such imponderables and approach a decision with humility. They ought to trust the people as much as possible to make judgments for themselves. In Italy the politicians reached a moderate decision, now ratified by the people: a woman over 18 can get a free abortion in any state hospital during the first 90 days of pregnancy once a physician determines she is liable to physical or emotional harm if she gives birth. In the same referendum, a simple abortion-on-demand proposal was voted down by a margin of 88.5 to 11.5 percent.

In this country politicians at the state level were beginning to grapple with abortion reform in the late 1960s, but the Supreme Court, with its landmark 1973 decision, *Roe vs. Wade*, short-circuited the political process. If that process had run its course, the right to abortion might be less vulnerable today than it is. But the *Roe* decision represented a fair judgment: abortions are freely available in the first trimester, subject to medical determination in the second, and banned in the third, when the fetus is viable. The public had no hand in making this law, but seems to support it.

Far from demonstrating humility in the face of terribly difficult issues, the right-to-life movement arrogates to itself the authority to determine when life begins and to command a woman what she shall do with her body. It's ironic that right-wingers are prominent in the movement, since when it comes to money and property, they prefer to keep the state's nose out of private business. It's doubly ironic for them to claim to be defending the welfare of the unborn when they so vigorously oppose public intervention to improve the welfare of the born.

The true mean-spiritedness of the anti-abortion movement—along with its political power—was displayed in the Senate's vote on May 21 to eliminate federal funding for abortions for poor victims of rape or incest. The courts have held that there is no legal requirement for the government to pay for abortions, but mere human sympathy would dictate that a woman should not be forced to bear a child conceived by violence, and that a child should not be forced to bear a child conceived by her father or her brother. Yet Jesse Helms called for the vote, and 51 senators followed, including such liberals and moderates as Joe Biden of Delaware, Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, David Boren of Oklahoma, Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota, Robert Byrd of West Virginia, Howard Cannon of Nevada, Alan Dixon of Illinois, Tom Eagleton of Missouri, John Heinz of Pennsylvania, Bill Proxmire of Wisconsin, and Jim Sasser of Tennessee. Maybe some of them thought it wasn't worth risking the wrath of anti-abortionists back home for the sake of the 200 or so women who annually file for Medicaid abortions in cases of rape and incest. But year by year, Congress

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has been paring away at the circumstances under which women may get government-funded abortions, and if the Helms-Hyde action is written into law only one exception will remain: abortions necessary to save the life of the mother. An amendment sponsored by Representative John Ashbrook would eliminate that one as well, meaning that poor women would be permitted to die, if necessary, to save the life of a fetus. That's how cruel these people can get.

Ultimately, of course, the right-to-life movement wants to ban abortion completely, returning to the state of affairs that prevailed in the 1950s and early 1960s, when, according to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, 30 women died per 100,000 abortions—an average of 280 deaths per year. Since abortion has been legalized, the death rate is down to two per 100,000. The right-to-lifers will say, though, that saving 200 women per year has been achieved at the cost of destroying millions of unborn babies. Some 1.2 million abortions are now performed annually, but in the old days the number of women seeking illegal abortions may have been equally high.

The next step in the anti-abortion campaign is Jesse Helms's initiative to overturn the Supreme Court's decision by a simple act of Congress declaring that the 14th Amendment's protection of life applies to fetuses from the moment of conception. If passed, the law almost certainly would be struck down by the courts, because Congress does not have the authority to amend the Constitution by legislation. But the right-to-lifers anticipate that passage of the Helms bill will increase momentum for an anti-abortion constitutional amendment. Before this process goes any further—before Jesse Helms accomplishes in America what Pope John Paul II could not in Italy—it is time that the American majority aroused itself to tell its politicians unmistakably what it wants.

What's so great about excellence?

The Big Mac Awards

John D. MacArthur got rich by selling one-dollar life insurance policies through newspaper ads during the Depression. "Dubious" is how *Parade* magazine charitably described this scheme in 1976, by which time MacArthur was a self-made billionaire and self-styled colorful old codger, fond of shoveling leftover food into his pocket at banquets. When MacArthur died in 1977, he left almost the entire billion to a foundation named after himself and his wife. MacArthur's own soft spots were for dogs, trees, and the handicapped. But his foundation's first original venture is a "Prize Fellows Program" designed to "honor a small number of exceptionally talented individuals who have given evidence of originality and dedication to creative pursuits." The first 21 fellows have just been chosen, with the help of 100 secret nominators scattered throughout the country. Each winner will get $24,000 to $60,000 a year for five years (tax free) plus health care and other expenses, so that they all may "devote themselves to their own creative endeavors." The net effect of John D. MacArthur's entrepreneurial life and philanthropic afterlife, then, will have been to take one dollar each from a large number of poor and ignorant people, assemble the money into somewhat larger amounts, and give these piles to a very few members of the prosperous, educated elite.

People, even editorial writers, have compared the MacArthur Foundation scheme to that old television series, "The Millionaire," in which an anonymous financier dispatched one-million-dollar checks to unsuspecting ordinary people. But the premises of the two enterprises are quite different. The charm of "The Millionaire" was the spectacle of fate being flouted. Life had dealt these characters a lousy hand, but suddenly they had a royal flush. The MacArthur Foundation, by contrast, sees itself as fate's midwife, combing the nation for life's winners and making sure they are delivered safely into affluence and esteem.

Fate rarely needs such help. The redundancy of the exercise is well illustrated by the names of the first MacArthur Fellows. Roderick MacArthur, son of John D., seems to believe that his selections are more exotic than those of similar exercises that are the stock-in-trade of other foundations, fellowships, prize committees, and so on. "It's a high-risk venture," he told the newspapers, ". . . the risky betting on individual explorers while everybody else is playing it safe on another track." In fact, far from requiring 100 anonymous tipsters, putting together a list like this is a parlor game. Given one or two of the names, many people could come up with half a dozen others without even knowing what the list was for. It could be this year's honorary degree recipients at Princeton, or a Presidential Commission on the Future of Values, or the celebrity endorsers for a particularly tony Scotch advertising campaign. Round up the usual suspects; check for diversity of fields, sexes, races; call the press conference.

What philanthropic purpose is served, for example, by conferring yet another honor on Robert Penn Warren, dear old poet though he may be? Warren won a Rhodes Scholarship back in 1928. Since then, according to *Who's Who*, he has been the official poet of the Library of Congress, the Jefferson Lecturer of the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, and winner of the Levinson Prize, the Caroline Sinkler Prize, the Shelley Prize, the Robert Metzler Award, the Sidney Hillman Award, the Edna St. Vincent Millay Prize, the National Book Award, the Irita Van Doren Literary Award, the Van Wyck Brooks Award, the National Medal for Literature, the Emerson-

(continued on page 8)

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Correspondence

Ailing industries

To the editors:
Robert B. Reich convinced me that we have botched efforts to protect "Industries in Distress" (*TNR*, May 9), but do our choices come down to only two: prop up the weaklings with tariffs and quotas, or redirect capital and labor into hot new technologies? Reich is saying, in effect, there's no point even in trying to make a pair of shoes, a shirt, a color TV, or an automobile in this country.

One problem with tariffs and quotas is that they raise prices without touching the wage differences between domestic and foreign manufacture. We could increase these prices, however, by banning any imports not made with labor paid some minimum wage. This would have the same protective effect as tariffs, and it might increase demand for our exports from dollar-flush companies and workers abroad.

A free market is supposed to make us all better off. Free trade internationally should do the same. Instead we have layoffs at home, exploitation abroad, and higher prices for consumers—all so a few companies can squeeze the last dime from aging plants before closing them. Reich's right; it's a mess.

Lee Wakefield
San Francisco, California

Cash on ice

To the editors:
Although it is obvious to any Alaskan with a perspective on history that Nancy Shute's exposé on "Alaska's embarrassment of riches" ("Cool Millions," *TNR*, May 16) stakes few claims to objectivity, it unfortunately will be accepted as accurate by those in the Lower 48 who have even less knowledge of Alaskan affairs than Shute. To call Alaskans "blue-eyed Arabs" in the face of the overwhelming cyclical poverty that characterizes the state's rural village population is to ignore the cultural, economic, and social dislocations that identify Alaska's 70,000 natives as the most poverty-stricken of all American Indian groups. To portray Alaskans as wallowing in billions of petrodollars is to couch one's assessment in the calculated distortion of sensationalism.

Like the fabled gold rush that preceded it, the oil boom merely repeats Alaska's boom-and-bust economic charade on a more extravagant scale, but with one significant difference. Despite the excesses that inevitably will litter the path, the sheer magnitude of the largess clears obstacles from the road to self-sufficiency and economic security, and allows the extension of basic human services to the 35 percent of Alaskans who live in places of fewer than 1,000 persons. This is the greater promise of "Alaska's jugular" and the challenge to Alaska's legislators. It is in this light that the Permanent Fund should be viewed; it is in recognition of Alaska's hand-to-mouth evolution from territory to state that huge capital outlays should be measured; it is in appreciation of the economic abuses by outside interests and the exclusivity of economic advantage monopolized by those few in the past that government "handouts" of public wealth must be judged.

Jonathan M. Nielson
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

Expense account excesses

To the editors:
Michael Kinsley misses the crucial point in his discussion of expense account living ("The Mystery of the Free Lunch," *TNR*, May 23). A tax deduction only has value if you are in a high tax bracket. Lower all tax rates across the board, integrate the corporate and individual income taxes, and the kind of expense account excesses discussed by Kinsley would disappear overnight by themselves.

Bruce Bartlett
Alexandria, Virginia

An ally for AI

To the editors:
Anne Colamosca discussed the pros and cons of changing the strategy of Amnesty International ("Amnesty International at 20," *TNR*, May 23). A better approach might be to let AI continue to do its thing without change and set up a parallel organization to use more aggressive political and pressure tactics. These would include picketing the offices of Aerolineas Argentinas and other enterprises owned by countries that violate human rights, encouraging worldwide economic boycotts, and using every kind of peaceful legal activity that hits them where it hurts.

Max Berking
Rye, New York

Keeping up with the Jones's

To the editors:
I must compliment you on being the only magazine I have read that understands the formation of English possessives. Other journals, which will remain nameless, carelessly add an apostrophe to names such as Jones. It's not Jones' book, it's Jones's book. Otherwise, it could be mistaken, on hearing, for Joan's book. Keep up the good work.

John J. Menaugh
Bloomingdale, Illinois

Q.E.D.

To the editors:
Your use of initials rather than names to identify staff authors is dizzying. You may know whom you are referring to, but I am forever flipping to the staff listing to match initials against team members. How do you talk to each other anyway? "Good morning, M.E.K.; are you OK?" "OK, M.P." "M.M.K. was looking for T.R.B." "I think he is with E.Y." Instead of Washington Diarist by M., M., or M., if you must abbreviate, why not W.D. by (name)?

Leonard A. Cole
B.A., M.A., Ph.D., D.D.S.
Hawthorne, New Jersey

Labour's leadership

To the editors:
Morton Kondracke's article, "Britain's Fledgling Party" (*TNR*, May 16), was, as most of his articles are, a wonderful piece of prose. I am sorry that he chose to mar his article by taking unfair salvos at the British Labour party.

The newly adopted manner in which the Labour party chooses its parliamentary leadership is more democratic—both the general membership and the Trade Union Conference are now able to influence directly the choice of party leadership. In fact this is not really a reform, but a return to the traditionally democratic manner in which the Labour

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Thoreau Award, the Copernicus Prize, *three* Pulitzer Prizes, and honorary degrees from Harvard, Yale, and 12 other colleges.

Robert Coles, the Harvard psychologist and another MacArthur Fellow, has won many of the same prizes as Warren (though only one Pulitzer), plus others. He accepted five honorary degrees in 1978 alone. The MacArthur list includes two other Pulitzer Prize winners (Carl Schorske, the Princeton historian, and James Alan MacPherson, the novelist), one other well-known Harvard professor (biologist Stephen Jay Gould), and at least one other Harvard honorary degree recipient (Elma Lewis, who promotes arts for poor blacks in Boston). Even the ones you may not have heard of are identified as having "won honors for her poetry, film-making and plays" (Leslie Marmon Silko, a 33-year-old Pueblo Indian) or having "received a number of awards" (Robert S. Root-Bernstein, a biochemist at the Salk Institute).

NOT ONE of the first MacArthur Fellows is suffering from lack of recognition for his or her talents. What's more, though some probably can use the money more than others, not one really faces financial obstacles to exercising his or her creativity. They are already doing whatever it is the MacArthur Foundation admires them for doing, many are doing quite well at it, and presumably they will keep on doing it, unless this windfall encourages them to stop.

What the MacArthur Foundation really seems to be rewarding is a sort of generalized capacity for receiving honors. In doing so, it has created the ultimate credential in a credential-obsessed society, a *reductio ad absurdum* of meritocracy. Other exercises of this sort, from the Nobel Prize downward, generally require excellence to manifest itself in some concrete form, and/or insist that the honor is contingent on some duty or other. The MacArthur people wish to celebrate merit in the abstract, and seem perfectly content to let it stay abstract. Thus their prize raises most clearly the question of what social function these exercises perform. Why is celebrating excellence considered a legitimate function of charities, and even of the government itself? That is, since the winners of these awards generally are winners in the larger sense, what good do these awards do for life's losers?

For a democracy, we are strangely tolerant, and even enamored, of gratuitous invidious distinctions between people. I once had a fancy fellowship at a time when it was not open to women. A great fuss was made about this and the rules were changed, as they should have been. But I could never get worked up over the notion that excluding women was *unfair*, because the fellowship, like all such institutions, was unfair by its nature. It was restricted to men, it was restricted to citizens of certain countries, it was restricted to college graduates of a certain age. More fundamentally, it was restricted to the sort of people who win fellowships—smart, glib, capable of moderate-to-excessive obsequiousness. All these restrictions but the first remain. The founder of this fellowship, like John D. MacArthur, had made his money by exploiting the sort of people who don't win fellowships. The only way to make the fellowship *fair* would be to dismantle it and give the money back, but I could never get my fellow fellows worked up over that notion. Thank goodness.

Prizes of this sort are considered part of the general incentive and reward structure that makes our society and our economy function. Perhaps some narrowly focused honors really do have this effect, operating on, say, artists or scientists like the profit motive on a business executive. But take something like the "Kennedy Center Honors," created three years ago because, according to Kennedy Center chairman Roger Stevens, "We believe that there is a need in this country for national recognition of individuals who enrich our lives and our culture by their life work in the field of the performing arts." A "need"? The first winners were Marian Anderson, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Richard Rodgers, and Artur Rubenstein. Have they really been underappreciated and underrewarded for their contributions to our cultural life? Is there another potentially great hoofer out there somewhere who has considered Fred Astaire's career—the fame, the glamor, the money, the love of millions, the other awards—and who has decided it's not worth it, until he reads that Fred has won the Kennedy Center Honors, and decides not to become a dentist after all? That's what you have to believe in order to suppose that giving Fred Astaire one more award serves any useful purpose.

Here's another one. George F. Kennan recently was awarded the 1981 Albert Einstein Peace Prize. The prize, worth $50,000, was established two years ago by the Albert Einstein Peace Prize Foundation, presumably to encourage peace through the price mechanism. Would George Kennan be any less for peace without the prospect of $50,000 before his eyes? It is a libel even to suggest as much. Have George Kennan's previous efforts for peace been thwarted by poverty and obscurity? It would be hard to say this of the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, sundry honorary degrees, the usual. Is anyone going to work harder for peace on the off chance that someone might give him $50,000? Unlikely. So what has the Albert Einstein Peace Prize done for peace?

Roderick MacArthur said in unveiling the MacArthur Prize Fellows Program, "This program is probably the best reflection of the rugged individualism exemplified by my father." But in fact it reflects precisely the opposite attitude. John D. MacArthur was self-made. He left school in the eighth grade and worked in a bakery, at a gas station, in the army, and at various entrepreneurial schemes. The basic theory of meritocracy is that in a free society the meritocratic virtues—imagination, daring, hard work—will produce their own reward, and in John D. MacArthur's

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case, for better or worse, they did. But there is no such thing as a self-made MacArthur Prize Fellow. This reward must be conferred. The MacArthur program, with its 100 "talent scouts" and its predictable standards, perfectly symbolizes the spirit of credentialism, in which these same meritocratic virtues are tested for in the laboratory and rewarded from the common fund. The enterprise is not merely silly, but snooty: an exercise in invidious distinction for its own sake.

Michael Kinsley

Pathans are not patsies.

Russia's Afghan Enemy

The grain embargo is gone, but the low intensity war in Afghanistan grinds on. Since the return of spring to the snowy mountain passes and stony uplands, the pace has quickened. Western news organizations have been excluded from the country since December 1979. Little firsthand information is coming out about the progress of the fight against the Soviet invaders. But analysis of what objective evidence does exist makes it apparent that the Soviets have little hope of inflicting a decisive defeat on the rebel forces.

After 17 months of fighting, the countryside still belongs to the *mujahiddin* and even in the major cities the Russians' grip is uncertain. In Kabul, the capital, they lose men steadily in twos and threes to sneak grenade attacks and sniper fire from the rooftops. Intelligence reports say Soviet troops dare not enter the city's labyrinthine bazaar district, even in daylight. In the southern city of Kandahār, attrition has reportedly forced the withdrawal of the Soviet garrison, and across on the relatively quiet western side of the country, near the Iranian border, a number of Soviet soldiers were murdered in their sleep recently by guerrillas who sneaked into their barracks in the city of Herāt. Similarly, Soviet control of the country's main roads is far from complete after dark. Even in daylight there are occasional forays by *mujahiddin* on the highway between Kabul and Jalalabad. The fighters come down from the surrounding hills, ambush a Soviet convoy, and make off with arms and other supplies.

It is mainly through captured weapons that they keep the war going, but recent reports say that the *mujahiddin* are now receiving recoilless rifles which they use to great effect against Soviet tanks, and that they also have acquired some British-made heavy mortars. The source of these weapons is presumed to be Egypt, whose attempts to arm the *mujahiddin* have been hampered, but by no means halted, by the Pakistanis, who are understandably nervous about allowing too great a flow of war materiel to cross their territory into Afghanistan. Other weapons are apparently trickling in across the Chinese border, including Chinese Army fragmentation grenades. Substantial reinforcements are expected to join the *mujahiddin* forces soon from the refugee camps in Pakistan. One indication of this is that the inventories of the Kohat gun factories in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province have beer cleaned out by Afghans going back to fight.

Against these poorly armed guerrillas, the Russians have deployed a formidable fleet of helicopter gunships. The gunships are at once the Soviet army's greatest strength and its greatest potential vulnerability. Guerrillas caught in the open are easily annihilated; catching them in the open, however, is no easy task. Much has been made of the fact that Afghanistan, unlike Vietnam, offers no lush jungle cover in which to hide. But the Afghans have had centuries of practice in melting into the rocks and crevices of their craggy landscape. Every Western traveler in Afghanistan has had the experience of driving for hundreds of miles and not seeing a soul, then stopping and immediately drawing a large crowd of people as if from nowhere. The high ground where the Afghan fighters camp is full of places to hide. The Soviet helicopter gunships do not fly well at high altitudes. None of the sporadic reports of gunships having been shot down has been confirmed; but if the Afghans should ever obtain even a small supply of shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles, the Russians could be in serious trouble in the countryside.

Soviet efforts to put some backbone into the puppet Afghan army, now reportedly down to some 25,000 men from its pre-invasion peak of 90,000, have met with no success. Desertions continue to drain the army, entire platoons and companies often going over to the *mujahiddin* with their weapons. Those who do not actually desert show a distinct reluctance to go into battle against their countrymen, and recruiting teams come back empty-handed from the countryside.

Unlike the French and the Americans in Vietnam, the Russians have held back from pumping ever-increasing amounts of men and materiel into an unwinnable war. Their numbers have not increased significantly since the invasion in December 1979 and, according to the best information, remain at about 85,000 men inside Afghanistan and another 30,000 just across the Soviet border in a support role.

But also unlike Vietnam, the resistance to the superpower remains completely fragmented. The *mujahiddin* are broken up into something like 200 separate fighting groups, often based only on clan or village affiliation, seldom with effective liaison and with no common ethos except love of war and hatred of foreign intruders. The six or seven organizations based across the Pakistan frontier in Peshawar form alliances that last a few days before breaking up and re-forming in some new configuration. So if the Russians can scarcely hope for a victory in Afghanistan they may well be spared the humiliating defeat the US suffered against a cohesive enemy in Vietnam.

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From all indications the Russians went into Afghanistan with very little understanding of the kind of people they would be up against. They should perhaps have taken note of the experience of the British, who fought three wars against the Afghans between 1848 and 1930 and were trounced each time. The Russians might have learned not only that the Afghans are consummate and cruel guerrilla fighters, but that war is a circumstance they positively relish.

Pathans are the people who are doing most of the fighting today, in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan. There are nearly nine million of them, some 40 percent of the population, with another four million across the frontier in Pakistan. Since the invasion they have killed, by some informed estimates, perhaps 12,000 Soviet soldiers. It is common to hear of clashes in which up to 100 Russians are killed and wounded.

War and honor are the Pathans' proper business, and if they had not been invaded by the Russians they would doubtless be busy killing each other, though on a lesser scale, in the innumerable and interminable blood-feuds that always have characterized the Pathan lifestyle.

Pakhtoonwali—the way of the Pathan, the harsh code by which these people live—contains an overriding first commandment: to wipe out dishonor by revenge. Disputes over land, livestock, women, personal injury, and insult can only be settled by bloodshed, and these feuds involve not just individuals and families but often clans and whole tribes, and continue for generations. The concept of *bardal*, or revenge, is so deeply ingrained that a loving Pathan mother will sing her baby to sleep by chanting a litany of the names of the men killed by the child's father or grandfather.

The names of the Pathan tribes—the Afridi, the Yusufzai, the Wazirs, the Shinwaris, the Mahsuds, the Mohmands—are a kind of wild poetry, and the Pathans, though largely illiterate, breed poets as they breed warriors. Their poetry is distinctive, shot through with images of violence even when speaking of love: "Your eyes are two loaded pistols/You have murdered me with your smile." The 17th-century tribal chief Khushal Khan Khattak is considered the Pathans' greatest warrior-poet. He used martial images to celebrate the beauties of nature: "The tulips are bright as flashes from the huntsmen's guns/The roses stand, a warrior phalanx, spears by their sides." He had no illusions about the innate goodness of his people: "Let but one lift his head a bit /Another quickly lays him low." Yet the Pathans had an overriding redeeming feature: "But still, O Khushal Khan, thank God for this/That they are not slaves but free-born men."

Khushal Khan had 57 sons. He didn't bother to keep count of his daughters, which says all that needs to be said about the place of women among the Pathans, then as now. Chattels they certainly are, as in most traditional Moslem societies. An unfaithful wife or an unchaste daughter will be put to death as a matter of course. Perhaps this has something to do with the tendency of Pathan women to commit unspeakable atrocities on enemy wounded. The women uphold the Pathan way as fiercely as the men.

A year from now it is not likely that much will have changed. If the Afghans get their portable missiles, the Russians will be doing somewhat worse; if not, they may be doing somewhat better. But the war will not be over. Even if their casualties mount, the Russians will be able to keep on fighting at whatever level and for whatever duration they choose. There will be no antiwar marches in Red Square, no dispatches from anguished young reporters in the Moscow papers. But the Pathans and their countrymen will not give up, even if a rational calculation of their chances dictates it. Against such people the Russians, for all their overwhelming firepower, can scarcely hope for much better than a long, bloody, and expensive standoff.

John Bierman

John Bierman, a free-lance journalist, has reported from Afghanistan as a BBC correspondent.

There's a hole in the program.

Home Care Ripoff

In 1976, with an initial investment of just over $1,000, Chicago attorney Michael Morrisroe decided to go into the home health care business. The federal government was about to pour vast sums of Medicare money into the fledgling program, and Morrisroe's clever construction of interlocking health care companies soon enabled him to siphon off a generous share. Five years later Senate investigators and a federal grand jury are trying to retrace the flow of illicit cash into Morrisroe's many repositories.

Morrisroe acquired this overnight wealth with the assistance of a "Medicare family," a tightly knit web of associates through which he disguised his financial interest in many of the dummy corporations that Medicare was keeping comfortably afloat. Morrisroe was able to set up five ostensibly non-profit home health care firms in the Chicago area, then sell them goods and services at highly inflated prices through several profit-making subsidiaries that he also controlled. All the bills were simply sent to Medicare. By the time his small empire started to crumble, Morrisroe and his associates had bled these companies for nearly one million dollars, much of which was deposited in a tax shelter in the Caribbean Islands, beyond the reach of federal auditors and nosy tax collectors. It is unlikely the government will ever recover a dime.

The story of Michael Morrisroe, largely pieced

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together by investigators for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, is more than the tale of one man's milking of Medicare. It is a graphic demonstration of the ways in which social programs like Medicare and Medicaid tend to invite fraud and abuse through complex reimbursement systems and weak audit controls. It reveals how quickly a few fast-buck artists are undermining a national trend toward greater use of home health care, a potentially less expensive and more humane alternative to nursing homes and hospitals in caring for the sick and elderly. And, if recent Senate hearings on the subject are any indication, it constitutes a warning from moderate Republicans that they will support such social programs only if the financial nuts and bolts that hold the system together can be tightened considerably.

The chairman of the investigations subcommittee, Republican senator William Roth of Delaware, complains that the home care program "has provided the opportunity for unconscionable profiteering. . . . Certainly the federal government should have learned from the rampant abuse in nursing home operations during the 1970s that anti-abuse controls are essential." Senator William Cohen of Maine says the Medicare system is "a charade" that allows non-profit firms "to give a much more charitable appearance, as if they're not interested in greedy profit," while they funnel large amounts of cash to their corporate subsidiaries.

THIS SORT of subterfuge has become increasingly common as the program has grown. The federal government now spends more than a billion dollars a year on home health care, over six times the level of six years ago. A growing number of corporate chains such as Upjohn and Quality Care have been setting up home care offices as quickly as fried chicken franchises. The original idea—that nurses' aides and therapists could hold costs to a minimum by treating patients at home—is being lost in the process. A federal survey of six high-cost cities found that some corporations now charge as much as $79.19 for a skilled nursing visit, and others, usually non-profit firms, offer the same service for as little as $4.56. In some areas state licensure laws prevent corporations from collecting Medicare funds for home health. So, while fervently lobbying to abolish these laws, certain corporations quietly have set up non-profit subsidiaries to get around this legal barrier.

Morrisroe has shown how simple this can be. He launched his operation by setting up five tax-exempt firms—Orland-Tinney, Southwest, Will-Cook County, Midway, and Oaklawn—that attracted Medicare patients throughout the Chicago area. But he listed his name at only two of the firms. He used one of the Medicare families, the Krusiec clan, to prop up these companies, which helped to shield him from outside scrutiny. Rose Krusiec Gallagher was a nurse at the Southwest home care firm, where her husband later became the administrator. Rose served on the board of directors at a second firm, Orland-Tinney, and her sister became executive director. Rose was an incorporator at a third firm, Midway, and later became administrator at Will-Cook County, which was incorporated by her father and another sister. Finally, she hired her mother, Marie Krusiec, as an employee and board member at Will-Cook County. The pattern was disguised through the use of maiden and married names, and Medicare paid all of their salaries.

MORRISROE then created his own profit-making consulting firm, the Northrad Management Co. Each of the non-profit home care firms hired Northrad to provide a vague assortment of training and consulting services at an average cost of $1,500 a month, all of which were billed to Medicare. Northrad had no regular office; in fact, its only paid employee was Michael Morrisroe. Federal auditors later had difficulty figuring out what, if anything, Northrad did. Mark Scanlon, a former assistant to Morrisroe at the Southwest home care firm, said that Morrisroe really didn't leave Southwest when he supposedly quit to form the consulting outfit. "He maintained an office in the back of the agency, where he controlled the daily business of the agency," Scanlon said. "Northrad was just an answering service." Jean Williams had been a nurse at the Oaklawn home care firm for all of three weeks when Morrisroe suddenly told her that she was being promoted to administrator. The bewildered young woman found herself with a hefty raise, a company car, and a slew of credit cards, along with a $2,000-a-month contract with Northrad. This, she said, "consisted of an occasional social phone call. Mike would call up and say, 'Hi, how are you? Anything happen today? Did Blue Cross call?'"

Williams also found that Morrisroe wanted her to run up huge bills on every item that conceivably could be charged to Medicare. "He would tell you to take your car on vacation and put on a lot of mileage, or just make up extra mileage on your monthly sheets," she said. "He wanted me to buy a degree and suggested I call the University of Beverly Hills, a paper-mill school, and send them $1,500 for a Baccalaureate degree. When we came to Washington on a three-day lobbying trip, we ate at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill and spent $300 on dinner. At home he gave me the receipt and demanded that I pay him $300 from petty cash." A former Oakland-Tinney bookkeeper, Carol Radatz, said that "I personally never saw Mr. Morrisroe for more than one or two hours a month, but we received monthly bills from him for $1,200 to $1,500. Gas receipts from California were paid by our agency and our girls were told to tear them into little bitty pieces."

Northrad soon branched out into other lucrative areas. The firm cooked up a subsidiary called Midwest Leasing to rent office furniture to the five home health companies, which also was charged to the taxpayers.

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Morrisroe was the owner, president, and full-time staff of Midwest Leasing.

Before long Morrisroe was driving around Chicago in a leased car, courtesy of Medicare, although his own firms were his only clients. It was then, at the beginning of 1978, that he decided to form a second secret subsidiary. This time he had Patricia Tinder, a former welfare mother, incorporate a profit-making outfit called Chicago Home Care, Inc. Morrisroe fired all the nurses' aides who were working for the five non-profit home care firms at a rate of $10.73 per visit, hired them back the next day at Chicago Home Care, jacked up their pay to $17.87 a visit, and proceeded to contract them out to the same firms where they had been working the day before. The result was predictable. One firm, Oaklawn, had charged Medicare $1,977 for 335 nursing visits during December 1977. The next month, under the new contract with Chicago Home Care, 340 visits cost $7,148.

Investigators say Chicago Home Care eventually started billing Medicare for patient visits that never took place. "Morrisroe began to manipulate the forms," said Scanlon, the assistant at Southwest. "We were getting paid for 15 visits a day when we should have only been paid for eight. He would put down that aides had made visits on their day off." When Scanlon finally resigned, he recalled, "Mike told me I was too idealistic for the business."

Others had no such reservations. One employee, Joann Stevens, was paid $164,428 over a two-year period. Pat Tinder, the new director at Chicago Home Care, was paid $164,924 in salary during the same period, though she continued to live in a run-down tenement—possibly because all of this salary money, along with $25,000 paid to Morrisroe, was quietly removed from the operation.

At the one-man Northrad firm, Morrisroe withdrew 95 percent of the company's assets, including $152,988 paid to himself and $50,000 in corporate funds. This money, totaling $450,000, was put in something called the Alternative Power Project Partnership, then invested in the Energy Engineering Development Co. in the Cayman Islands, which, with its tight bank secrecy laws, is accurately known as a foreign tax haven. For added protection, Energy Engineering supposedly invested the money in an offshore drilling project near the coast of Costa Rica. Not surprisingly, it struck no oil. The State Department says it has no record of any oil drilling in that area, but Morrisroe and associates were safely able to tuck away all that Medicare money without paying a penny in taxes.

Investigators say another $511,118 in Medicare funds was removed from two of the home care firms, Southwest and Will-Cook County, but they haven't been able to discover where those profits ended up. A federal grand jury in Illinois is now picking its way through the remnants of this sordid affair. The mysterious Morrisroe (who holds a private detective's license) declined to testify before the Senate subcommittee, on the advice of his attorney, James Burns. "We think a lot of this can be explained away, but under the circumstances, I really can't comment," Burns said.

Why was this allowed to go on for so long? FBI agents subpoenaed some of Morrisroe's records as early as 1979, but the folks at Medicare apparently never got the word. Carol Radatz, the former bookkeeper at Orland-Tinney, said that the day after the FBI subpoena was slipped under the door, her boss "opened the locked file cabinet and put all the records in an opaque garbage bag and took the bag home with her."

THE FACT that Medicare officials continued to bankroll Morrisroe's operation tells a great deal about how the reimbursement system works. The program relies on private insurance companies (in this case Blue Cross) to determine which home care expenses it should pay and which should be disallowed. These insurance companies are also responsible for keeping a lid on soaring hospital and nursing home costs. As Senator Cohen says, "It's so easy to exploit the program. . . . Blue Cross had no incentive to follow up because it wasn't their money either, was it?"

Actually, Blue Cross auditors raised the right questions about Northrad's vague services and Chicago Home Care's inflated rates, but Blue Cross doesn't have the power to make its recommendations stick. A health care provider can challenge any expense rejected by his third-party insurer through a convoluted, but sometimes rewarding, appeals process. Morrisroe took his appeal to the Provider Reimbursement Review Board, an obscure agency that operates in the shadow of Baltimore-Washington Airport. By law he was able to send highly paid lawyers and accountants to the board's office in Linthicum, Maryland, and charge their salary, travel, and hotel costs to Medicare. (If you think this encourages hundreds of time-consuming appeals, you're right.) Blue Cross, representing the government, also can charge its legal and travel bills to Medicare. If the PRRB rules in favor of the provider, as it does about a third of the time, the secretary of Health and Human Services can step in and overturn the ruling. This has happened in about half these cases. Then both sides send their lawyers into federal court and start the process for a second time, with Medicare again picking up the tab.

Morrisroe wasn't quite so fortunate. The PRRB ruled against him on every count. The board found that Blue Cross had rightly rejected about $250,000 in expenses from two of his home care firms, Orland-Tinney and Will-Cook County, and ordered the firms to reimburse Medicare.

There is, however, a catch. The Medicare program pays all home health care firms in advance, with cash up front, for the expenses they think they will incur over the coming year. If those estimates turn out to be wrong, or if auditors raise questions a year later, the money in dispute has already been spent. In Morris-

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roe's case, the money had already been laundered through his home care firms to Northrad and Chicago Home Care, which were always the first to be paid. The only assets of the non-profit firms are some desks and file cabinets. The money that federal officials really want to recover is floating beyond their reach somewhere in the Cayman Islands.

The other major problem with the reimbursement scheme is that there is no incentive to hold down costs. The more one spends, the more one can charge Medicare; cost-conscious firms merely end up with fewer dollars. Given these temptations, it's hardly surprising that some home care operators have charged the taxpayers for everything from European vacations to country club dues.

The real tragedy here is that home health care is one of the best ideas to come down the pike in years. It lets old folks remain in the community with family and friends instead of shutting them away in concrete institutions. The Reagan administration recently signaled its support for the home care concept. But instead of trying to streamline the bureaucratic maze that governs the program, the White House is pushing a Medicaid cap that merely shifts the burden of rising costs to the states while doing precisely nothing about all that fraud and waste. The only way to persuade moderate senators like Roth and Cohen to press ahead with this new program is to redesign the crazy system that allows people like Michael Morrisroe to play three-card monte with the taxpayers' money.

Howie Kurtz

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The reform movement is the life of the party.

Poland's Communists Reborn?

by Abraham Brumberg

On September 8, 1980, barely a week after the signing of the historic agreements in Gdansk, Szczecin, and Jastrzebia, Stefan Bratkowski, a well-known Polish journalist, addressed a meeting of the Association of Polish Journalists. He castigated the Polish Communist party as a "feudal vassalage system ruled by something akin to an oligarchy of barons," an "association for the defense of the leadership's errors," responsible for "disorganizing our economy, involving the country in debts that have brought it to the verge of bankruptcy, and patronizing thieves and spendthrifts."

By that time public diatribes against the authorities were no longer rare. But Bratkowski's speech created quite a stir. It combined three disparate elements: a savage attack on Poland's ruling elite and its dismal political record; a rebuttal of charges leveled against some of the government's critics, notably the Social Self-Defense Committee, KOR; and a vigorous defense of the party's rank and file. The party's leadership, Bratkowski said (referring not only to the top echelon but also to the powerful *apparat*), must be swiftly brought to account. Yet he added that it would be wrong to assume its three and a half million members are nothing but "smart alecks, toadies, and racketeers"; many are "outstanding and earnest people," eager to work for the good of the society.

Bratkowski is not just another "dissident," but a highly respected writer, the leading spirit behind the "Experience and Future" club, a loose coalition of about 140 intellectuals who have published several penetrating analyses of Poland's political and social system since 1979. Oddest of all, he is a veteran Communist, a party member of 25 years' standing. Several years ago he was sacked from his job as editor of the weekend supplement to the daily *Zycie Warszawy*. At that time his friends could do little to help him. Now things were different: on October 15 Bratkowski was reappointed to his old job, and two weeks later he was elected chairman of the Association of Polish Journalists. Bratkowski soon succeeded not only in transforming *Zycie Warszawy* into one of the liveliest and most informative newspapers in Poland, but also in bolstering his position as the party's favorite *bête noire*. His biggest bombshell came on March 23, the day after the Politburo had in effect given its imprimatur to the brutal police action in Bydgoszcz, when the country seemed perilously close to a major confrontation. Bratkowski's "Open Letter to Party Members," disseminated by the Polish Press Agency PAP, blamed the party's "hardlin-

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ers" for Bydgoszcz. The hardliners, he said,

> are trying to involve the whole party leadership and the government in a clash with the entire society. Embarking on a path fraught with incalculable consequences, they are attempting to provoke society to behavior justifying the use of force. . . . Our hardliners stand for no program except . . . confrontation and disinformation. They promise nothing but drama. I have been observing their activities for months and I do not discern even a single proposal which goes beyond the defense of their own positions, beyond the ambition to reach out for still higher ones. Virtually everything they do steps up tension and mutual distrust.

He ended with an appeal to all rank-and-file members "to say loudly what our choice is . . . for at the time of this great test it is on us that the future largely depends."

Bratkowski did not name the hardliners, but the secret had long been out. Two of them, Stefan Olszowski and Tadeusz Grabski, rose to the bait at the next Central Committee meeting, on March 29-30. "To be included by Bratkowski among the hardliners," said Grabski, "particularly when the defense of socialism is at stake, is not a disgrace. . . . The true disgrace for me, and I do not hide it, is to belong to the same party . . . as Bratkowski." Not to be outdone, Olszowski accused the writer of "factionalism" and "anti-party activity." But thousands of party members disagreed, flooding the Central Committee and numerous newspapers with protests and demands that Bratkowski's critics promptly be expelled from the party. In the end the party's Control Commission rapped the culprit over the knuckles, recommending that he "restrain himself from similar acts in the future." It's safe to predict that he won't.

The "'Bratkowski affair" illustrates some of the extraordinary processes that are now going on deep within the ruling party. No Communist party is immune from internal strife and the Polish party has been no exception. Yet unlike other ruling Communist parties—the Soviet Union's above all—since the mid-1950s the Polish party has hardly ever bothered to conceal its schisms. During and immediately after Gomulka's return to power in 1956, the two major contending factions would meet in separate locations, whence came their labels, "Natolin" and "Pulawska." Their memberships were well known, as were their platforms—respectively (and in the most general terms) "hardline" and "reformist." Similar divisions appeared over a decade later, when a group known as the Partisans, composed largely of Communists who had been active during the German occupation, mounted a concerted attack on the Muscovites, who had arrived with the victorious Soviet troops in 1944-45, and came to dominate the party and government apparatus. (Since many of the Muscovites were of Jewish origin, the Partisans' offensive was full of nationalistic cant and soon turned into a poisonous anti-Semitic campaign which resulted in the exodus of virtually all the remaining Polish Jews.)

The party battle of 1967-68 was joined by Edward Gierek's followers, who espoused "professional expertise" and "economic modernization," without—significantly—any concomitant political liberalization. The struggle was waged in the open, each group trying to mobilize support both from within party ranks and from the population at large. Gierek won, coming to power in December 1970 after Gomulka's "heart attack" (a fate that was to befall Gierek himself ten years later). But his victory came on the heels of two traumatic events: the anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual campaign of 1968, and the bloody workers' uprising of December 1970. Both events, especially the first, gravely affected those in the country who had still believed that the road to reform lay through the party, or through a process of incremental government reforms—that the system was capable of transforming itself. Among them were disillusioned Marxists, secular liberals, and liberal Catholics, who had seen themselves as the "loyal opposition," and were in fact represented in the parliament. After the developments of 1968-70 they concluded that ideological motives which once may have played a role in factional wars now were mere smokescreens for power struggles.

According to Polish secular and Catholic liberals, democrats, or erstwhile socialists, the Communist party was bankrupt as a vehicle for social and political change. No leader or group of leaders could be relied upon as potential "reformers" susceptible to rational argument or tacit collaboration with non-party reformers. The middle-echelon *apparatchiki* no less than the leaders, they argued, and even the rank and file were simply power-hungry politicians and opportunists. If they occasionally seemed to articulate different views, it was for demagogic reasons; their paramount concern was the preservation of the political status quo and their positions in the bureaucracy.

THIS VIEW clearly had a basis in reality. Under Gierek thousands of party members, some of them still retaining a modicum of faith in the redemptive values of socialism, were sent packing (140,000 out of two million members were expelled by the end of 1971). They were replaced by a younger generation—better educated, pragmatic, loyal to the new leader, virtually all of the same ethnic stock, and only a few with proletarian pedigrees. With Gierek's "economic miracle" (massive imports and huge investments in heavy industry) in full swing, many party members grew prosperous, corruption and cronyism proliferated, and ideology turned into empty sloganeering. The party grew to nearly three and a half million members by the end of 1980, and had the appearance of an enormous social club, in which membership conferred few duties and considerable privileges. It seemed to be that quintessential "new class" that Djilas had dissected so acutely less than two decades earlier.

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Yet if this collective portrait is accurate, how is one to explain the presence of people like Bratkowski, who even before last summer had participated openly in activities (such as the "Flying University") sponsored by outright opposition groups? How explain that among Solidarity's ardent unionists there are nearly a million party members? Above all, how can one reconcile this image with the remarkable growth of a reform movement within the party itself, a movement which by the next congress in July may succeed in making the party, as First Secretary Kania himself recently said, "unlike any other Communist party in the world"?

There are many in Poland and elsewhere for whom the notion of a "liberal Communist" is a contradiction in terms. And to be sure, Poland today is full of "born-again liberals," whose professions of sympathy for the process of renewal (especially when accompanied by strident attacks on "anti-socialist" and "counterrevolutionary" elements) reek of hypocrisy. But the proceedings of various "plenary" sessions of the Central Committee since last October and reports of numerous meetings with rank-and-file members show genuine differences even among the party's top leaders. Some party leaders demonstrate nothing but virulent hostility toward Solidarity, while others (like Mieczyslaw Rakowski, longtime editor of the weekly *Polityka* and since February of this year deputy premier in Jaruzelski's government) plead for understanding and a "genuine partnership" with an organization full of "marvelous people." Some complain about the persistence of mendacious propaganda and lack of genuine information in the official media; others defend the censors for their "high-minded dedication to party principles." Some openly praise the "Grunwald Association"—a group of pathological anti-Semites and "super-patriots" that came into being last March; others denounce any attempts to "fan the fires of anti-Semitism." Some openly urge that the demands of trade unions, peasants, and students be resisted; some (according to a revealing report in an April 25 article in *Polityka*) "act as if the trade unions are merely a rash that will soon disappear"; and others warn that any further confrontations would spell national disaster.

For several months, however, the party and government leadership as a whole, seeing any further pluralization of Polish life as a threat to their power and privileges, either was in the grip of paralysis or actively resisted any attempts to come to terms with the new reality. But for thousands of rank-and-file members (many of whom clearly had long been critical of the party's policies and welcomed an opportunity to speak their minds), the continuous attempts to curtail the growth of the trade unions, the refusal to honor the promises made in Gdansk and elsewhere last August 31, the press attacks, the obstinate opposition to negotiation and mediation, and the scattered episodes of intimidation were a source of frustration and disillusionment. "What happened to us, party members, has been devastating," one party activist wrote openly in the March 8 issue of *Czas*, a weekly published in Gdansk. "Some couldn't stand it and left." Indeed, according to official figures, 200,000 had left the party as of March. Others, recognizing that workers joined Solidarity because they saw it "as an authentic working-class movement" and as an answer to the "injustice, corruption, drunkenness, and thievery" of the authorities, flocked to the new trade unions.

Most stayed in the party but showered their leaders with embarrassing questions. "Why must I listen to foreign radio stations?" *Polityka* quoted one member as exclaiming at a party meeting. "Because our press lies! Give us the truth, even the worst truth, but the truth!" Others demanded to know why the party authorities, instead of responding immediately to Solidarity's "rightful demands," dragged their feet, thus creating greater social unrest while eroding still further the party's credibility and authority. Others insisted that the party's hardliners (the Polish word is "hard-heads," and its use is now standard in the country's mass media) be expelled from the party. Finally, as the questions remained unanswered and the demands unmet, they took matters into their own hands.

THUS CAME the birth of the remarkable party reform movement, generated largely by the same forces that brought Solidarity into being, and evincing in many respects the same aspirations and ethos. Its origins can be traced back to the early fall of 1980, soon after the wave of industrial strikes and the emergence of the "free, independent, and self-governing trade unions." Once the party's leadership announced that a congress was to take place in the near future, the movement began organized discussions and prepared proposals to be presented, examined, and ratified at the forthcoming party gatherings. Some of the various "pre-congress" committees that sprang up throughout the country were initiated by the party authorities, but in most cases they arose spontaneously, without any sanction from above. The two central problems they all addressed were internal party democracy and the role of the party in society. In the process the party's *apparat* was subjected to merciless criticism—as much for its contemptuous and manipulative attitude toward the rank and file as for having been responsible for the present crisis in the country. "Since *we* have been the objects of public wrath," said the chairman of the Gdansk Pre-Congress Commission, "it is up to us to assume responsibility for the party, for the way it has functioned, for its program, for its internal democracy. . . . We must create all the necessary guarantees that the kind of crisis we have all lived through since December 1970 will never happen again."

What, then, are these guarantees that the leadership will be asked to enact at the forthcoming congress? There have been hundreds of proposals, but the most important can be summarized as follows: 1) proper and secret elections to all party positions; 2) open nomina-

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tions from the floor of all candidates for office; 3) limitations on the number of terms in office; 4) "rotation of cadres" (thus assuring the continuous flow of new personnel); 5) separation of government and party posts; 6) a thorough liberalization of the censorship system—as much within the party as in the entire country; 7) the removal of corrupt and compromised officials; 8) the establishment of channels whereby elected officials can be held responsible and accountable for their actions to their electorate.

Other broadly supported proposals are no less interesting: a five-year probation period for each new member, his subsequent fate to be determined not by officials, but by the "basic party organization"; the immediate expulsion of officials who "have violated the norms of internal democracy and have been especially guilty of stifling criticism and persecuting people for their views"; a firm limitation on the earnings of party officials, so that their standard of living does not exceed the "socially accepted maximum." In general, a vigorous assault has been made on the principle of "nomenclature," through which the top party leadership is assured complete control over personnel appointments. The reformists have insisted that this principle, which lends itself to extraordinary abuses, be abolished.

The "movement from below"—as it is frequently described in the press—had been gathering momentum. Yet faced (like the process of "renewal" in general) by fierce opposition and sabotage from the bureaucracy, it might have resulted in an open confrontation with the authorities had it not been for the police incident in Bydgoszcz last March. Indeed, as one surveys the developments of the past few months, it becomes clear that the Bydgoszcz incident—and the consequent threat of a general strike and even of fratricidal war that could have brought in Soviet troops—marked a historical turning point for the party and for the country as a whole. Perhaps the shock was therapeutic; in any case, the party's leadership was galvanized, and processes that until then had been glacial suddenly accelerated. Party leaders (including First Secretary Kania) were dispatched to party organizations all over the country, to listen to grass-roots grievances, to answer questions, to offer assurances.

The "horizontal linkage" movement, headed by Zbigniew Iwanow, a 37-year-old economist, was no longer a target of abuse. Its demand that party organizations be free to consult with one another, and work out common programs and objectives, without direction from above—a notion that directly challenges the hallowed Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" (dubbed "autocratic centralism" by one party member)—received a sympathetic hearing from some of the top leaders, and unqualified support from others. On April 15, in the northwest city of Torun, Iwanow organized a conference of 750 democratically elected representatives from numerous party organizations to discuss their common platform and work out a series of demands for the forthcoming congress. Even though Iwanow had been summarily dismissed from the party last November, his conference was now attended by high party officials (as observers, not voting delegates) who, reported *Polityka*, assured the participants that they did not consider the meeting "a factional gathering or a schism but a real element of the pre-Congress discussion."

At the Central Committee meeting right after the Bydgoszcz incident, the voices clamoring for an accommodation with the trade unions and the party's own rebels were still somewhat muted, but at the next meeting, held on April 30, Kania delivered a speech that in effect embraced most of the changes advocated by the "horizontalists" and other reformists: "democratic electoral precepts with . . . universal secrecy, limitations on the number of party posts . . . , the separation of party and government posts . . . , the principle of rotation limiting to two terms the possibility of anyone holding the same elected position." Kania's speech, as well as the committee's official resolution, naturally drew the approval of the reformists, who at the same time made it known that they would not rest until the changes in the party's statutes are approved and implemented by the congress.

PERHAPS the most fascinating and significant aspect of the reform movement is its similarity to what is going on within the trade union movement. In both cases highly educated young professionals (economists, writers, historians, sociologists) play a central role in shaping proposals and guiding the members' deliberations. In both there has been a struggle between the moderates and "radicals" (in the case of the party there even have been calls for an end to the "leading role of the party"), and in both the moderates have clearly prevailed. Both are animated by similar political and moral aspirations—for greater personal freedom, for a more egalitarian social and political system. In both, elemental authoritarian attitudes clash with populist and democratic pressures. And since both are singularly unconcerned with ideology and preoccupied largely with practical problems, there has been a steady effort to consult and even to engage in active collaboration. At one factory, reports Hanna Krall in the April 25 issue of *Polityka*, the local Solidarity committee and the party organization work out of adjoining rooms. Each is headed by an engineer in his early thirties. Each deals with routine workers' problems—pensions, working conditions, housing, health facilities—and they have formed a joint committee to discuss such national problems as economic reforms and censorship. The collaborative effort, according to the reporter, came in the immediate aftermath of the Bydgoszcz incident. The pattern is beginning to spread throughout the country. (See photo on page 18.)

How important is this movement? What are its chances of success? The first question is far easier to answer than the second. It has become increasingly

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obvious—to elements within the party's leadership as well as to some of the leaders and advisers to Solidarity—that the party is faced with two drastic alternatives: complete disintegration or far-reaching democratization. Clearly the first alternative is unthinkable. However high the threshhold of Soviet tolerance, it certainly will never extend to the collapse of the Communist regime in Poland. This is something that even the most radical reformers within the party and within Solidarity understand, and this is why during all these months there have been no suggestions to alter the relationship—either of the country or of the party—with Moscow, and no discussions of principles such as "proletarian internationalism," the code word for the Soviet party's "leading role" in the "international Communist movement." The system must remain, the party must remain. The only question is how to make them work more effectively.

But if the party is to stay at the helm of the state, it can do so only by reforming itself, ruling by consent rather than by *diktat*. "Whether the party will assume the character of a genuine social organization, whether the bureaucratic elements within it will decline—on this hangs the future of Poland," says the Catholic journalist and historian Andrzej Micewski, voicing a sentiment that often has been echoed. Yet the success of this process is far from assured. For one thing, it depends on the extent to which the party *apparat* can accommodate itself to the increasing pressures from below—as the newspaper *Zycie Warszawy* put it recently, to work for "social peace, rather than confrontation." Between now and July 14, when the congress is to convene, we may confidently expect the hardliners, backed by party and government functionaries with a vested interest in the status quo, and with the tacit or active encouragement of Moscow, to pursue tactics that have been used in the past against Solidarity, the students, and the farmers. According to some knowledgeable people in Poland, the still entrenched bureaucracy has a fear and a hatred of the reformists so elemental that it is willing to resist change even to the point of national collapse and Soviet military intervention.

Solidarity will have to play a critical role in the consolidation of reforms. Until recently the trade union movement held to the principle that any appeal from the government for "partnership" must be rejected, on the grounds that the function of the trade unions is "to maintain control, and not to assume co-responsibility" for running the country, as Lech

POKÓJ NAPRZECIWKO

HANNA KRALL

In the April 25 Polityka, a local Solidarity leader (with beard) and a local Communist party leader are on parallel tracks. The headline is "Adjoining Rooms."

Badkowski, a distinguished writer and Solidarity leader, puts it. Yet control, as Badkowski goes on to point out in the April 11 issue of *Polityka*, "is *ipso facto* responsibility," and Solidarity, as the most authentic representative of the public at large, can no longer shirk the latter. The problem of what kind of "partnership," and how much, is now being vigorously discussed in Solidarity's press. In the first issue of the new *Solidarity Weekly* (April 5), Waldemar Kuczynski, an economic adviser to Solidarity, argues that the economic crisis never will be solved if Solidarity remains indifferent to it or content (as some other advisers have urged) merely with monitoring the work of the authorities. At first glance, says Kuczynski, any active collaboration with the government in implementing necessary structural reforms—which are liable to hurt the living standards of millions of workers—may seem to "contradict our role of defenders of workers' interests, but in fact it is consonant with it." Similar sentiments are voiced increasingly throughout the country. The position of those who have been urging Solidarity to work with the party and government has been strengthened by official concessions in the wake of the Bydgoszcz incident: the recognition of Rural Solidarity, regular access to the public media, and the establishment of numerous working committees aimed at solving problems in consultation with the trade unions and other

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public organizations. Under these evolving conditions, the advocates of collaboration maintain, "partnership" may become a reality rather than sham.

What about Moscow's attitude? There should be no doubt that for the Soviet leaders the reform movement within the party and the increasing collaboration between Solidarity and the ruling elite present a far greater potential threat than anything that has happened in Poland thus far. A party that is no longer controlled from above, that is subjected to constant grass-roots pressure and control, a party, moreover, that sheds much of its power in an attempt to work with a society suspicious and still bitterly hostile to it, is completely at odds with established Communist dogma and practice. A Communist party that succeeds in democratizing itself inevitably will become a source of attraction throughout Eastern Europe, even though the conditions that precipitated the Polish upheaval do not exist on the same scale and intensity anywhere else in the Soviet bloc. Moscow is acutely aware of the dangers of "renewal"—which is why the Soviet press has recently mounted yet another offensive against it, this time singling out not only KOR and Solidarity but also "revisionists," some of them actually named, within the party itself.

There are those in the West who concluded long ago that any change in the structure and method of rule of the Polish Communist party inevitably will bring Soviet troops into the country. This possibility cannot be ruled out. The situation in Poland remains tense, and the mood of the population volatile, angry, and impatient. Yet if the Kremlin thus far has been reluctant to provoke a bloodbath and to occupy Poland for an indefinite period of time, it may be even more reluctant to do so when faced with a country more unified and more self-confident than ever before—a country whose more than 35 million citizens are ready to remain within the Soviet security sphere if left to themselves, but who would constitute a perennial source of chaos and instability if confronted daily with a hated occupier in their midst. Much will depend on whether the party reformists, together with Solidarity, are prepared to honor the "leading role" of the party—not only in appearance but in actual fact. This is why in the elections now taking place, strenuous attempts are made not to pursue a vengeful policy, but to retain a good part of the conservative party apparatus, while making sure that its freedom of action is severely circumscribed. Otherwise, a leading reformist warned in the April 4 issue of *Polityka*, "the process of compromise within the party may never be realized, as the experience of other parties has demonstrated"—a reminder which, as many Poles fully recognize, can be ignored only at their country's peril.

The party congress will be the acid test. It will demonstrate whether the "reformists" are able to enact institutional guarantees for democratic procedures, while leaving enough power (ultimate control over the media, above all control over the country's foreign policy) within the hands of the ruling apparat. Both they and their colleagues in Solidarity have been eminently skillful in combining their aspirations for greater freedom with respect for Moscow's basic interests—that is, for their country's future. Confounding their reputation as "headstrong romantics," thus far they have proved to be remarkable realists.

When politics borrows a white coat, beware.

Science ex machina

by Charles Krauthammer

Senator John East would like to ban abortion, so he is pushing a bill that would declare a fetus a person and make abortion murder. East is undoubtedly motivated by religion, but to appeal to it would be unfashionable, if not unconstitutional. He appeals instead to an even higher authority: science, the politician's stone. "The Congress finds," reads Senate Bill S. 158, "that present-day scientific evidence indicates a significant likelihood that actual human life exists from conception." And East had no trouble finding a robed scientist or two to agree. A typical witness at East's hearings on the bill began like this:

> I am Dr. Alfred M. Bongiovanni from Philadelphia. I am currently professor of pediatrics and of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Pennsylvania. I have also been professor of pediatrics at the University of Ife in Nigeria, at the University of Puerto Rico, and Dean of the Ponce School of Medicine in Puerto Rico. I received my medical education at the University of Pennsylvania. . . .

Look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair. And

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what discovery has he come to report? That "human life begins at the time of conception."

But East went a little too far. Not even a Dr. Bongiovanni could conjure up any "scientific evidence" that "actual human life exists from conception." In principle he couldn't. Personhood ("actual human life") may be an ethical concept or legal convention, but it cannot be a scientific entity. Within a week the National Academy of Sciences passed a resolution to that effect: "[The bill] purports to derive its conclusions from science, but it deals with a question to which science can provide no answer." But as the Academy's press release took pains to point out, this determination too was not made by just anyone but by "Academy members who include the most distinguished of America's scientific population." And who know enough about politics to fight science with science.

Senator East is not the first to use science to support his political views. For a generation scientists have been taking political stands, acting explicitly in their capacity as scientists. Physicists working for nuclear disarmament, for example, have claimed special attention by virtue of their special knowledge. Theirs is a worthy cause but an empty claim. A person who makes the Bomb knows no more about how to prevent its use than a historian or a diplomat or any informed citizen. Nuclear physicists do have a *moral* claim to special attention on this issue because, like all workers, they feel a particular responsibility to see to it that the product of their labor is not used for harm. (Similarly, the farmer shares a citizen's responsibility to see that children do not get poisoned milk; but as a farmer, he feels a particular responsibility that no one be harmed by *his* milk.) Logically, the moral authority that the nuclear physicist possesses should extend equally to the person who digs the silos. But, of course, no one would read the *Bulletin of the Atomic Silo Diggers.*

DOCTORS HAVE hopped on the bandwagon too. The *New England Journal of Medicine* recently published a manifesto by the leaders of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. They soberly outline the consequences of nuclear war and ask other physicians to join them in a crusade against nuclear weapons. Another worthy endeavor, but why are they speaking as physicians? "It may be argued," they concede, "that nuclear war is an issue in the political and social domain and that physicians need confront it only as concerned citizens." They raise this objection only to deny it. They reason that since nuclear war is a threat to health, physicians have something special to say about it. Really? Hospital orderlies and meat inspectors also are concerned with health. Would anyone pay them particular attention on this issue? And nuclear war is a threat to everything: flowers, animals, steel mills, amusement parks. Should their custodians claim special attention as well? Would anyone listen to Florists Against Nuclear War? But for some reason people will listen to doctors. And that brings us to the doctors' final—and real—reason: "Physicians bring excellent credentials to the task of public education on this topic. They are widely respected as teachers and accustomed to interpreting scientific findings for their patients and for the public at large." In other words, people are in the habit of deferring to someone in a white coat. When it comes to nuclear weapons, physicians have no special knowledge, nor do they have the moral burden of the nuclear physicists. They have something better: simple, undifferentiated, multipurpose authority. For a good cause, why not exploit it? That is exactly what Dr. Bongiovanni must have thought when he took to the podium to expound on fetal personhood.

SCIENTIFIC credential-flashing is only the crudest means by which science comes to influence public policy. A more subtle infiltration occurs when political discourse takes on the language and models of natural science. This phenomenon is not new. James Wilson and the framers of the Constitution were powerfully influenced by Newtonian balance-of-forces imagery. Marx, like other 19th-century systematizers, aspired to turn history into science and reveal the iron laws of "scientific socialism." Today a certain avant-garde liberalism has staked a claim to the language and images of ecology: interdependence, systems, one-world. Barry Commoner, Jerry Brown, and other eco-talking practitioners of the "small is beautiful" politics of limits are concerned with more than just preserving the natural environment. They want our *social* relations remade to conform with nature's principles of cooperation, harmony, and balance. For them the elements of social life, from the neighborhood to the nation, exist in a delicate balance analogous to the ecological balance of nature. Because any single action will have incalculable effects on all elements of the system, they emphasize the inherent limitations of human action. It is a profoundly conservative doctrine. Nineteenth-century liberals would have understood very well the nature of this conservatism. They would have seen in today's ecological politics the equivalent (dressed up in biological language) of what they called (borrowing from physical chemistry) the steady state. And for them the steady state represented the ultimate conservative horror: stagnation.

That is the problem with using natural science metaphors to prop up political ideology. They are arbitrary. The same social phenomenon that can be seen through one metaphor as the lifeless, closed system of the dreaded steady state appears through another as the dynamism of biological homeostasis. Both metaphors are polemically useful because they imply nature's sanction—or disapproval—of a particular social arrangement. And both implications are fraudulant because to say that a social system has an analogue in the natural world is to say nothing about its desirability.

When people decide to take these metaphors seri-

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ously and let nature, or what they think is nature, dictate social policy, they can produce much mischief indeed. After all, nature provides all kinds of models to fit all kinds of political prejudices. Today some choose cooperative ecology. At the turn of the century competitive Darwinism was the rage. Evolutionary biology had discovered nature's plan; eugenics would apply that plan to society. Eugenics was an optimistic creed and many progressives took up the cause. It promised the scientific abolition of such persistent scourges as poverty, crime, insanity, and "feeblemindedness." Eugenic research had shown that poverty and other forms of "degeneration" ran in families. In a characteristic leap of illogic, the eugenicists concluded that these social ills were genetic and therefore could be eradicated in a few generations by prudent breeding and sterilization. It took the Nazis to demonstrate finally the awful possibilities of such specious lessons from nature.

THE NATURAL sciences exert their influence on politics chiefly by presenting elegant models for imitation. The social sciences exert their influence by creating facts and breathlessly proclaiming newly discovered "truths" about man and society. James Coleman, the University of Chicago sociologist, is one of America's most distinguished discoverers of such truths. His recent discovery that school quality affects student achievement is derived from his latest study comparing public and private schools. He found that, even taking social class into account, students in private schools do better than those in public schools.

The report has created a firestorm of protest. First, it is methodologically inept. It controlled for social class, but not for the ability of private schools to select their students and to expel troublemakers and dullards. Second, the report is political dynamite. Coleman made that clear when he began invoking it in support of a voucher plan under which parents could send their children to private schools at public expense. Opponents of that plan say it threatens the survival of the public schools and continued racial integration. One outraged critic, Dr. James Comer, associate dean of the Yale Medical School, declared in the *New York Times*:

> The report is the third stage of an effort by some to legitimize an already existing two-tier public school system . . . separate and unequal. . . . The first stage of the process began with the grumbling of middle-income parents. . . . The second phase was exploitation of the issue by politicians who are more responsive to the middle class than the poor. The third, and present, stage is 'scientific documentation' by a 'name' social scientist from a distinguished university. . . .

But when liberals decry the harnessing of social science to politics, they're being slightly disingenuous. They have not been known to disdain the authority of science to support their own causes. Fifteen years ago Coleman issued another massive report. It concluded: a) that social class and not school quality principally determined student achievement; b) that whatever effect the school did have on achievement was related not to its facilities (laboratories, libraries, etc.) or the quality of the teaching, but chiefly to the educational background and aspirations of the child's classmates; and c) that this peer effect was stronger for black children than for white children. In the late 1960s this study became the basis for a number of major court decisions calling for school busing. Coleman himself appeared often in court and Congress as witness and advocate for the cause. But by the mid-1970s Coleman had changed his mind. The original study was wrong, he said, because it had overlooked factors such as white flight, the subsequent resegregation of the schools, and the disruptive racial turmoil that accompanied busing.

The Coleman saga illustrates some of the problems with giving reverent attention and front-page headlines to the transient and often contradictory findings of social science. A study can be found to prop up any social theory, however cranky. Even George Gilder managed to have his bizarre marriage of Horatio Alger capitalism and male-dominant anthropology blessed by the authority of some study. He found one that "indicates that married men work between two-and-one-third and four times harder than married women," and "husbands work 50 percent harder than bachelors"—evidence that man the hunter and provider is meant to work, and not woman. In using this study Gilder ignores the fact that men are expected to work in this society and married men have more mouths to feed than bachelors. In other words, for the purposes of his conclusions, it was a poorly controlled study.

And that is the major problem with our mania for social science facts. It tends to reduce debate about politics and principles to disputes over sociological methodology. The 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision that outlawed segregation held that segregation harmed black school children and this was "amply supported by modern authority." Footnote 11, which has been called "the most inflammatory English ever in fine print," spelled out the authority: the works of seven social scientists. It touched off debate over the methodological soundness and reliability of, among others, Kenneth Clark's study of the reaction of segregated black school children to black and white dolls. As one reviewer of that decision concludes, those who wished to see the *Brown* decision not as an expression of civilized truth but as a brand of sociology were given a large target to aim at.

Hitching great and principled political decisions to scientific studies with short half-lives is simply bad politics. A requirement, perhaps even a definition, of science is that its findings be subject to empirical disproof. And when that disproof emerges it can take the principle down with it. In 1966 Coleman predicted that desegregation would improve educational achieve-

(continued on page 24)

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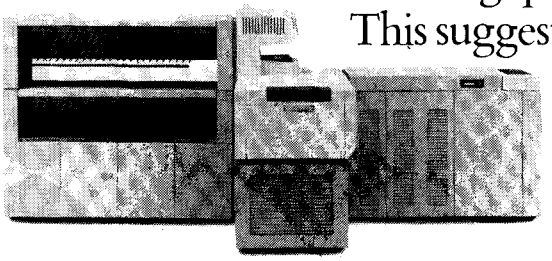

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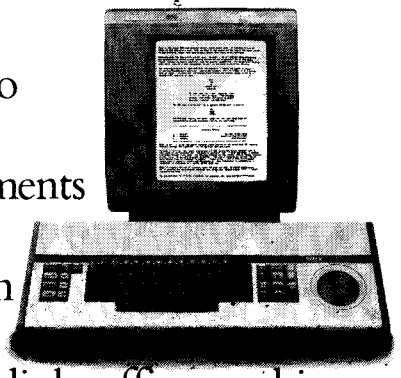

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ment. In the short run that promise added strength to the busing cause. Within a decade, when that claim had evaporated, it contributed to busing's undoing.

This is not to say that social science has nothing to tell us. When its inferences are modest it can sharpen the relation between seemingly unconnected phenomena. Moreover, it can raise questions about "commonsense," traditionally accepted relationships, as James Q. Wilson has done regarding the connection between imprisonment and rehabilitation. But before we begin social engineering on the basis of new social discoveries, a little skepticism about their reliability and durability is warranted. "In a period of civilization in which the physical sciences are immensely advanced," points out Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "there are not many things that social science has to say." And yet, "this has not in the least inhibited [the social sciences'] assertiveness. It may well have served to abet it. For the moment their ambitions are truly imperial. There is little by way of human behavior which the social sciences do not *in theory* undertake to explain, to account for."

ON THE WHOLE, however, sociology is a relatively young and humble practitioner of scientific imperialism. Compared, at least, to psychology. There is little by way of human behavior that psychology has not *in practice* undertaken to account for. In 1926 Freud mapped out the domain of psychoanalysis:

> . . . it can become indispensable to all the sciences which are concerned with the evolution of human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion and the social order. It has already, in my opinion, afforded these sciences considerable help in solving their problems. But these are only small contributions compared with what might be achieved if historians of civilization, psychologists of religion, and philologists, and so on would agree themselves to handle the new instrument of research which is at their service.

But psychology did not await a genius like Freud to extend its reach. Half a century earlier another psychology had swept through America. In 1899, decades after its decline, Alfred Russel Wallace, the great British biologist and co-discoverer of evolution, could still write: "It will prove itself to be the true science of the mind. Its practical uses in education, in self-discipline, in reformatory treatment of criminals, and in the remedial treatment of the insane, will give it one of the highest places in the hierarchy of the sciences." He was talking about phrenology, an enterprise now entrusted to a few boardwalk practitioners who read character from bumps on the head. But in 19th-century America, phrenology was a revolutionary, "scientific" psychology. It taught that the mind is not ethereal, but the product of the brain, and that the size of the various lobes of the brain determines the level of development of all character traits. (It also held that the skull reflected accurately the size of the brain lobes. Hence bump reading.) Most important, it held that behavioral exercise could enlarge these lobes and thus change character. It was a primitive behaviorist psychology that claimed people could perfect themselves through exercise and education. Phrenology caught the imagination of many American reformers. Through disciples like Samuel Gridley Howe and Horace Mann it had profound—and progressive—influence on American education, penology, and treatment of the insane and disabled. (Howe was so imbued with phrenology's optimism that he once declared in an official report that even oysters were capable of improvement.)

But phrenology did not stop there. Its purpose, declared the *American Phrenological Journal* in 1849, was "to phrenologize our nation, thereby [to] reform the world." Historian John Davies has chronicled its ambitions:

> As psychologists do today, phrenologists told their age how to be happy, how to choose a profession, how to select a wife, how to raise children; they offered detailed curricula and pedagogical techniques. . . . Thus, this young, experimental, and somewhat protean science was of interest to scientists, doctors, social thinkers and reformers of every description. . . . It offered hope for all and a vision of ultimate perfection.

One of the great phrenological popularizers wrote books like *Love and Parentage* and *Amativeness* (both reached 40 editions), *Self-culture and Perfection of Character, Education and Self-Improvement, Temperance and Tight-lacing*, and, inevitably, a 900-pager: *Sexual Science*. Dr. Joyce Brothers would have been envious.

Phrenology was a monumental dead-end in the history of science but a remarkable success in its own time. It is not surprising that its more sophisticated successor sciences have claimed and exerted comparable influence. Today we have television therapists and their literary imitators giving solemn advice and scientific answers to everything from coping with everyday life to the correct way to conduct diplomacy and deal with terrorism. We have psychohistory and psychocriticism. Last month we got a kind of psychoethics—a new book called *Limits: A Search for New Values* in which a social psychologist announced the rediscovery of traditional ethics and pronounced it therapeutic.

The examples of psychology's reach are countless, and they are not just restricted to the extraterritorial depredations of unauthorized psychiatric opportunists. Mainstream psychiatry has been no less ambitious. For much of this century psychoanalysis was the ruling

Coming:
Ronald Steel on
Foreign Policy Hubris.

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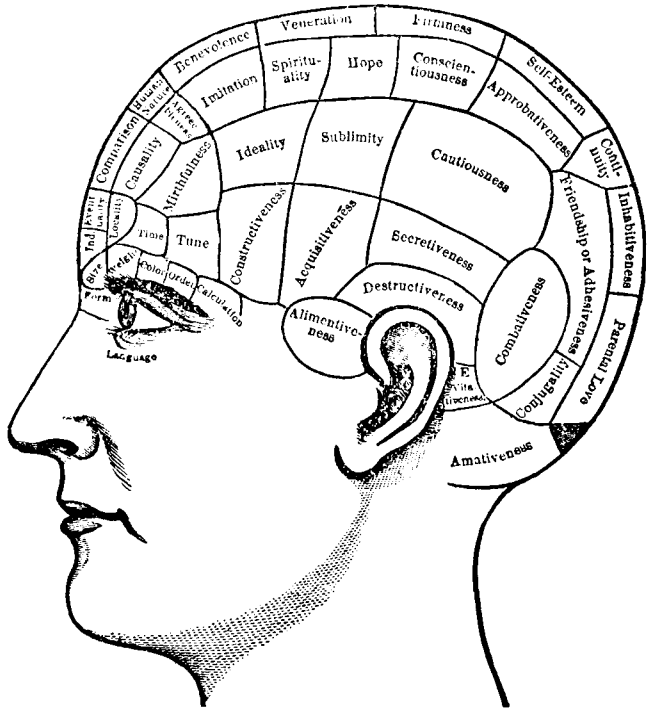

Phrenology's brain. From *Phrenology, Fad and Science* by John D. Davies. (Archon Books, 1971).

paradigm. It offered a technique for understanding people and a technology for changing them. Once again the combination of scientific authority and hope proved irresistible. In the 1920s Freud's disciples set up child-guidance centers to *prevent* mental illness before it could develop in adults. And later, according to the *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*: "As a result of sociological and anthropological research and of such social criticism as Lawrence Frank's *The Society as Patient*, focus on the sources of mental disorder was broadened to include *the entire culture*, improving the effectiveness of *the entire normal population* as well as individual patients." (My italics.) Psychoanalysis is now in decline, but not its messianic impulse. In the last few years some mental-health leaders have begun arguing that the major responsibility for societal health and welfare has now devolved upon the psychological sciences. The argument runs like this: modern medicine has largely conquered infection, historically the major cause of disease, suffering, and premature death. Today our well-being is threatened not by external agents like bacteria, but by our own actions: the addictions—drugs, alcohol, tobacco; and the aggressions—suicide, homicide, and war. The epidemic of our generation is self-destructiveness, or, as Pogo put it: "We have met the enemy and he is us." What is to be done? In the past there have been many answers to this question: repentence, revolution, and of course eugenics, phrenology, and the like. The new hope is a discipline called behavioral medicine armed with the emerging technology of behavioral engineering. Not coercive *Clockwork Orange* stuff, but newly tested methods to alter or even prevent "bad" behaviors using mass persuasion or peer pressure techniques. A science of preventive behavior modification is possible, it is said, and society desperately needs it. At these scientific symposia one often hears the objection that our techniques are still too crude and unreliable. One rarely hears the objection that reforming man and eradicating vices is a task not to be turned over to science. And not on the technical grounds that it might fail, but on the libertarian grounds that it might succeed.

THE ROAD mapped out by the new behavioral engineers is undoubtedly paved with good intentions. The same cannot yet be said of the newest behemoth on the scientific horizon: sociobiology. Its aim is to achieve "a new synthesis" founded on a genetics of behavior. Its territorial claims are cosmic. Founder Edward O. Wilson would like us to consider man from the "macroscopic view." Then, he writes in his classic text, *Sociobiology*: " . . . the humanities and the social sciences shrink to specialized branches of biology; history, biography and fiction are the research protocols of human ethology; and anthropology and sociology together constitute the sociobiology of a single primate species."

Wilson and the sociobiologists are not an aberration. An intrinsic dynamic of science is to achieve higher levels of abstraction, increasingly powerful axioms generalizable to more and more of the universe. Lower levels of generalization—those that stick closely to the observed phenomena—are the least interesting to scientists. They are, however, the most useful to political life because they are easiest to apply and most difficult to abuse. For example, correlating student achievement scores with parental income is boring research, but, if its limitations are appreciated, can be useful to the policy-maker. Correlating achievement scores with parental *genes* would be a greater scientific coup but would involve such staggering generalizations and such a vast chain of intervening variables as to be worthless in making rational political decisions. As theories of the mind, ecological paradigms, and grand sociobiological models ascend to higher and higher levels of abstraction, their purveyors will claim to have more and more to say to us about ordering our lives. In fact they will be less worth listening to.

But science keeps extending its domain principally because we allow it to. We ask it to do normative work for which it was never designed. We demand of science and its priesthood solutions to dilemmas posed by abortion, nuclear weapons, racial antagonism, and human self-destructiveness. In doing so we are not just being naive. We are inviting more territorial adjustments like the one proposed by Edward O. Wilson in 1975: "Scientists and humanists should consider together the possibility that the time has come for ethics to be removed temporarily from the hands of philosophers and biologicized." One can only imagine what ethics will look like when the philosophers get it back.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Stars in Black and White

Let's start with the white star, Burt Lancaster. I first saw him on Broadway in a war play called *A Sound of Hunting* (1945), in which he was prominent, and the most important thing I remember about him is that I can't remember him. I remember others in the cast but not Lancaster. Then he went into films, became a big star, and from 1946 to the present has been, for me, one of life's lesser but persistent mysteries.

Now Lancaster is on view in two films, *Atlantic City* (*TNR*, April 18) and *Cattle Annie and Little Britches*, which was made two years ago and is just released. In both of these pictures he plays criminals. The latter is one of those Westerns at an odd angle—in this case two girls in their mid-teens join a gang of bank robbers. *Cattle Annie* is also one of those pictures that look jostled: jostled in script conferences, in editing, possibly in re-takes. Everyone knew something was wrong with it and was fidgeting with it. Well, after all the fidgeting, it still has no cogent story and no developed characters, so that the deep expressions of affection have no base and the longed-for quaintness doesn't jell. The screen is merely strewn with remnants for an hour and a half. Amanda Plummer, who makes her screen debut as one of the girls, has neither the brilliance of her father Christopher Plummer nor the wind-up-toy charm of her mother Tammy Grimes. The other girl is Diane Lane, whose part was put through the office shredder. That good actor John Savage is wasted. That bad actor Rod Steiger wastes us. The director was Lamont Johnson, but the film doesn't look as if *anyone* had directed it. Whoever was nearest the camera called the shot.

Lancaster plays the leader of the gang, Bill Doolin, another one of those criminals who have been around so long that they become gray eminences. Admittedly, the disaster of Lancaster's performance this time is not all his fault: the role, like the film, is in snippets, most of which are writing and directing clichés. But it occurred to me that this role, like his con man in *Atlantic City*, has a certain resemblance to the Lancaster persona and place. Criminality quite aside, of course, except in the aesthetic sphere, Lancaster has been around so long that, like the two crooks he has just played, he has gained respect: by endurance, by suavity, by everything except socially beneficial achievement.

Some of his parts have lucked out a bit better than others, such as *Birdman of Alcatraz*. (Surprising, by the way, how often he has played lawbreakers, from *The Killers* to the present, considering that his residual image is of a starch statue.) But the parts have kept coming, by unquestionable audience demand, and now he's reached the point where, simply by racking up decades, he has the aura of an old master—just like Art Carney, a modestly gifted sketch performer, who by hanging around, getting gray and paunchy, has acquired the reputation of being an artist.

One clue to Lancaster's ineffectuality is through one of his effective roles, in Visconti's *The Leopard*. I saw it with subtitles and with Lancaster dubbed by an Italian actor. He *looked* stronger and more credible by getting rid of that generally gassy voice with that fake genteel accent impasted on common speech. But most of the time he has been stuck with himself, entire, and most of the time we have been stuck with his torpid, earnestly striving imagination and his uninspired choices (not of roles but in his performing). His acting has always seemed to me that of an amateur imitating actors, as if he had hired a professional to do his role privately and was now showing us, as best he could, what he had learned from the pro—or like the leading actor of the Elm Forks Little Theater who saw its latest production when it was on Broadway and is trying to imitate the Broadway star.

His big rugged looks have helped him to stardom, of course, as has some genuine sweetness that has occasionally seeped through the synthetic syrup he dispenses. And now he's aging, so the sex appeal is being differently oriented: he's becoming courtly, striving not for ballsiness but for elegance. With the white hair and the long career and the good manners, he would, if this were Britain, be up for a knighthood. All we are able to do for him, however, is let him play criminals with our assurance that we know, no matter whether he is running numbers in Atlantic City or robbing banks in the West, that his heart is in the right place. After all, we've known him so long.

The black star is Richard Pryor. He, too, is now visible in two films in both of which he has law troubles. *Stir Crazy* (*TNR*, December 27, 1980), dreadful, is a huge smash. Pryor co-stars with Gene Wilder, and I'd bet that Wilder's performance is about as much responsible for the success as the fact that the picture's transportation coordinator was James Langhorne. People go to see Pryor.

His new picture is *Bustin' Loose*, and it isn't much better than *Stir Crazy*. If you want to know the plot, it's about a Phil-

Films Worth Seeing

Café Express. Pleasant Italian comedy, new but reminiscent of 1960s "common man" films. Nino Manfredi restrained and appealing.

Gal Young Un. Independent American film about Florida country folk, 1920s. Directing's a bit unsteady, the acting extraordinarily valid.

Lion of the Desert. Stirring, largely accurate historical action spectacle, about Bedouin resistance to Italian conquerors in the 1920s. Anthony Quinn stalwart as the real-life resistance leader.

Oblomov. Emphases are shifted in this Soviet version of the great Goncharov novel, but much of the result is empathic and moving.

SK

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adelphia parolee who is persuaded by his parole officer to drive a broken-down school bus to Washington State. In it are the officer's girlfriend, a teacher, and a gang of kids whom she's taking to stay at her parents' farm. The girl is played by Cicely Tyson, the first time I've seen her out of character make-up, doing all right. The officer is Robert Christian who has done good work Off Broadway but is punching a pillow in this part. The kids are a reshuffle of the Bad News Bears, with girls added. It doesn't matter. People will go to see Pryor.

He continues here with the character he is working out for himself, the black man who lives on the other side of the law but assumes from Moment One that he has our sympathy. Not respect for a monumental figure, like Lancaster, but sympathy for a black man trying to scrounge along, doing it with plenty of guile but without malevolence, doing it with a comic deftness that keeps the *character himself* from being too frightened. His antecedent, including the performer's reassurance to the very character he is playing, is Chaplin's Tramp. Pryor is something like Chaplin up to date.

I got the first flash of Chaplin early in this film. Pryor is raiding a warehouse at night. He slips past the guard, with a shopping cart. Inside the warehouse Pryor is going along on his hands and knees, a pencil flashlight in his mouth, when he meets, at right angles, a gigantic guard dog waiting behind some cartons. Pryor freezes. I collapsed.

I kept collapsing all through the picture, taped together though the script is—especially with some sequences added at the end to make the picture feature length. I'll cite just one more Pryor sample. Somewhere in the midwest he is trudging along through the woods at night looking for help when, à la Chaplin, his path converges with another, and without his knowing it for a while, he is at the head of a Ku Klux Klan parade. He then cons the Klan into coming back with him and helping him get the bus out of a mudhole.

Like all good farceurs, what Pryor is, essentially, is a good *actor*, not a doer of comic stuff. (Just like the Two Ronnies on PBS, who ought to play Beckett.) His relation to his character, described above, his view of himself *and* character in various situations, his perfectly timed ability to convey all these things are what make him hilarious.

Odd coincidence, though. A big white stuffed shirt, playing two criminals and getting away with it because of his stuffiness. A lithe, foxy black actor playing two criminals and not even trying to "get away with it": triumphing both with his talent and his assumption that we bring certain contemporary knowledges into the theater with us.

The Culture Watch.

Notes on the Bottom Line

by Robert Brustein

I had hoped to bring you a review of the Elizabeth Taylor *Little Foxes* this week, but I couldn't get into the show. A genial press officer informed me that she hadn't put aside any second night tickets for me—or for a number of my colleagues on the magazines and out-of-town newspapers—and I couldn't buy my way in because the house was completely sold out. I probably could have begged a pair of house seats from the playwright, who is a friend of mine, but she was experiencing considerable discomfort as a result of a fall and I didn't want to disturb her in a time of pain. So . . . at least for the present, readers of *The New Republic* will be spared my wisdom on the subject of the new Lillian Hellman revival.

This minor incident has a wider significance. Along with a few other scratchy critics, I've occasionally been denied tickets to Broadway productions because either the playwright or the producer suspected I would have a negative reaction. This is the first time I have been banned because my reaction was considered of no importance whatsoever. The press office staff simply assumed (no doubt correctly) that small-circulation critics like me were unlikely to affect the run of the play one way or another, and, therefore, would be taking up expensive seats more profitably occupied with the warm bottoms of paying customers. The producers of *The Little Foxes* have secured the services of a glamorous movie star who guarantees a packed house as long as she stays with the show. Under these circumstances, who needs criticism that doesn't produce immediate financial returns? (By the way, *The Little Foxes* is an indictment of Americans who live by acquisitiveness and greed.)

Obviously, we are entering a new phase as a society, where the value of things will be determined less by their intrinsic qualities than by their impact on the bottom line. The social consequences of this for poverty programs, housing for the elderly, education, social security benefits, and all those other bothersome drains on the nation's exchequer are becoming clear enough, as our eminently personable and appealing president hacks away at anything unlikely to yield benefits to business or defense. Also becoming obvious are the cultural consequences of Reagan's bottom-lining: if Congress approves his proposed cuts in the budget of the National Endowment of Arts, the federal government will be spending more money on military bands ($89 million) than on the artistic activities of an entire nation ($83 million)—assuming, of course, that Reagan doesn't decide to eliminate arts patronage altogether. Not so obvious yet is how deeply our present-day bottom-line economics is influencing other sectors of society, including such traditionally liberal institutions as universities, non-profit arts groups, and the press.

Let us, for example, cast an eye over the cover of a recent issue of the *New York Times Magazine* where three gifted performers—Mickey Rooney, Jane Seymour, and Gregory Hines—have been caught in a moment of grotesque glee, presumably over what the cover article calls "The Box Office Boom: or How Broadway Sells Itself." Additional photographs decorating the body of the article feature four more stars of long-running Broadway hits displaying equally dazzling smiles, while the various producers responsible for this toothy merriment line up on Broadway as "models of up-to-date entrepreneurs." It is true that an article of this sort appears in the

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New York Times annually, right before the Tony awards, for the purpose of celebrating the financial health of the New York commercial theater. This one, however, has been written by Margaret Croyden, whose previous contributors to the culture pages of the *Times* have usually chronicled such scourges of the box office as Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and the Living Theater.

Rather than describe new theatrical techniques or artistic advances, Miss Croyden has been commissioned here to analyze box-office statistics. "Current predictions are that 200 million tickets will be sold for the entire 1980-81 season, and result in half a billion dollars' worth of business for the city." Her editors allow Miss Croyden a few asides on the quality of Broadway fare, which by common consent is declining every year, and even permit her to quote a few dissenters (one of whom notes that "We have no plays that have anything to do with our lives"). But despite a few caveats, the most poignant conclusion of this article is that "artistic evaluations aside, the consensus among producers is that *business* has never been better" (Miss Croyden's italics).

And the business of America, as Calvin Coolidge once told us, is not artistic achievement but *business* (my italics). Reflecting the close relationship that exists between the health of Broadway theater and the economy of New York City, business seems to have become the chief business of the *New York Times* culture pages too. Miss Croyden devotes most of her allotted space to press agentry and marketing techniques, including the impact of television advertising and credit-card purchasing, when she is not describing burgeoning real estate values in the Times Square area; for all the concern with quality and aspiration, she might as well be writing about the underwear industry. As for the non-profit theater, originally designed as an alternative to pickup star casts, tourist audiences, safe choices, one-shot crap games, and a theater centralized in New York, this enterprise is valued only for what it can feed to Broadway, and anyone questioning this profitable partnership is written off as "small-minded." Meanwhile, there are not four or five major permanent acting companies left in America, most of them having disbanded following sorties in New York, and the scheduling of the rest is largely dictated by the kind of fare that might attract the attention of a Broadway producer. The dream of a decentralized American theater, devoted to developing artists and expanding audience tastes, is rapidly becoming an abandoned relic that has fallen off the bottom line.

But why, when everybody is smiling, am I introducing this melancholic, "small-minded" dissent? One reason is that there is something in those photographs that scares me. The producers look natural enough, staring out at us from Duffey Square with the confident self-satisfaction of successful businessmen; but I'm really worried about those actors, and their anxious effort to please. There's something unsettling here, a patently rotogravure insincerity, a hint that spending your days on the bottom line can play havoc with your sense of self. Stars are the meat and potatoes of the Broadway banquet—Elizabeth Taylor's temporary absence from *The Little Foxes* caused 90 percent of the audience to turn back their tickets to this classic American play and temporarily closed the house—but even an undiscriminating diner will eventually repudiate frozen food. The kind of look reflected in these photographs reminds me of Marx's descriptions of people alienated from the fruits of their labor.

Stars have always been regarded as commodities, but what happens when everything is esteemed according to how well it sells? Nobody can object to a healthy entertainment industry; what is truly alarming is when the demand for entertainment threatens to obliterate the conditions necessary for the process of art. In our depressed economy, where the sources of subsidized funding have virtually disappeared, the barriers protecting the desire for quality from the need for profit are disintegrating as well, and the most common standard of measurement becomes the balance sheets. It's not hard to predict the future in such a climate because it's already happening. Newspapers will estimate their value by circulation; universities will evaluate their courses by enrollments; publishers will rate their books by sales; theaters will measure their plays by applause; galleries will appraise their painters by commissions; and society will assess its citizenry according to income. The Nielsen rating, designed to measure responses to mass entertainment, will soon become the technological determinant of every activity, no doubt producing the same level of culture one finds on network TV.

We stand to lose more than our culture from this bottom-line mentality; we are in danger of losing our young as well. Little more than ten years after this country experienced an unprecedented explosion of youthful commitment the younger generation is drifting in cynicism, boredom, and anomie, seeking ever greater sensation, escaping into drugs, drink, rock concerts, and media narcotics. Conspicuously missing from their lives are purpose, heroic models, motivation, ideals—the very language one uses to describe the condition becomes a source of scorn and derision. Meanwhile, the liberal intellectual community is momentarily frozen in bewilderment, impotent witnesses to the dismemberment of our country's remaining values. The smile on the face of our well-liked, good-natured star president, like the smile on the faces of Broadway's star box-office boomers, masks a profoundly unnatural condition. It is the condition of the bottom line, and it is already exacting an unexpected price.

Reconsideration.

Dorothy Day

by Robert Coles

The end came for Dorothy Day (she was 83) on a Saturday afternoon, November 29, 1980; the end of a long pilgrimage, the end of a particular "long loneliness"—a phrase she got from Mary Ward, a 17th-century English nun, and used as a title for her autobiography, published in 1952. Even before her death she was commonly referred to as a saint, but she had no

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Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin look over a copy of *The Catholic Worker*.

patience with such a description, which she knew often masked an easy dismissal of her concrete social and political efforts. Nor is *The Long Loneliness* (first published by Harper & Row and now out of print) in any way one of those sentimental, pietistic tracts all too often mistaken, these days, as evidence of sanctity.

"I have not always felt the richness of life, its sacredness," she tells us in an introductory, confessional chapter. Nor is she about to let the matter drop there. She pointedly declares herself to be "a journalist, not a biographer, not a *book* writer." She will try to render justice to factuality (in this instance, the particulars of her own life) rather than gloss over things with cleverly personal affirmations of a spirituality finally found in mid-life. For her a conversion to Catholicism meant no self-serving righteousness, no unblinking triumphalism, but a reminder of how perplexing this life never stops being: "What is man, where is he going, what is his destiny? It is a mystery."

She loved Dostoevsky, and especially loved the statement Kirillov makes in *The Possessed*: "All my life I have been haunted by God." Hers was a religion of search rather than confident discovery. Hers was a religion of doubt overcome tautly, unnervingly, by God's gracious presence—a gift she knew never to take for granted. Hers was, too, a religion of frank, relentless self-scrutiny in the Augustinian tradition of "Lord, that I may know myself in order to know Thee."

Right off we are reminded of the "ugly, gray, drab, monotonous sins" that every confessor hears from every penitent, hard-struggling believer. Yet *The Long Loneliness* is not a melancholy book; its author never takes the fatally self-centered step down the road of self-excoriation, a clever twist of pride. She is, for the most part, a winning and amusing storyteller. She had an interesting, lively, even hectic youth. She was, early on, a strenuous critic of the status quo, a political activist, a feminist. She went to jail many times. She was a beautiful woman, had been passionately in love with certain men. She had been a so-called "bohemian," an anarchist, a pacifist—none of them, to her, pejorative terms. She doesn't name-drop when she mentions her acquaintance with Ben Hecht or Charles MacArthur, with Mike Gold or Trotsky, with Max Eastman or Eugene O'Neill. She lived her life in their company, writing muckraking journalism, walking on picket lines, embracing Manhattan's urban, free-thinking culture, urging on her readers (she worked for *The Call*, then *The Masses*) a socialist vision.

She wouldn't offer (in a book published at the height of this republic's acquaintance with the honorable Joseph R. McCarthy) the slightest apology for her radical actions or associations. For one thing, of course, she would die a radical—still strenuously critical of capitalism, still fervently on the side of the poor, wherever they struggle to live, still anxious to fight all sorts of "principalities and powers." Moreover, she never saw Christianity as an alternative to the radical life. On the contrary, her Christ, as she keeps reminding her readers in *The Long Loneliness*, is the one who was born in the most humble of circumstances, and died an enemy of church and state alike. In between, He consorted with the lame and the blind and the mad, with beggars and lepers, with all sorts of despised and scorned men and women—until, finally, He became one of them: nailed to a cross, a thief to His left and a thief to His right. Politically, Dorothy Day belonged—with Silone, whose writings she constantly mentioned—to what Irving Howe has called "the homeless left," for

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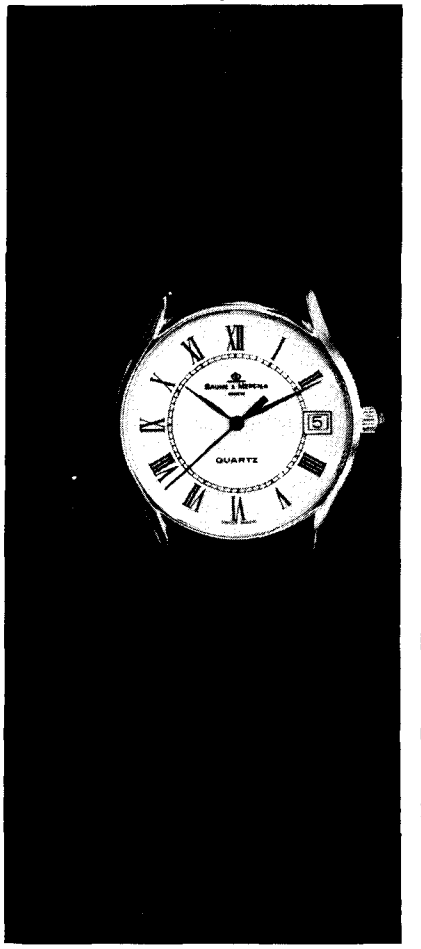

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whom the gulag was an awful reminder of what the revolutionary state can end up being.

She was, of course, a moralist; but she also had an observer's shrewd eye, a novelist's vision. (She published a novel, went to Hollywood to make her fortune as a script writer.) At times she reminds one of Orwell—their similar response to the sight of poverty, and their nose-centered indignation:

> The poverty of New York was appallingly different from that of Chicago. The very odors were different. The sight of homeless and workless men lounging on street corners or sleeping in doorways in broad sunlight appalled me. The sight of cheap lodging houses, dingy restaurants, the noise of subways and elevated railways, the clanging of streetcars jarred my senses. Above all the smell from the tenements, coming up from basements and areaways, from dank halls, horrified me. It is a smell like no other in the world and one never can become accustomed to it. I have lived with these smells now for many years, but they will always and ever affront me. I shall never cease to be indignant over the conditions which give rise to them. There is a smell in the walls of such tenements, a damp ooze coming from them in the halls. One's very clothes smell of it. It is not the smell of life, but the smell of the grave.

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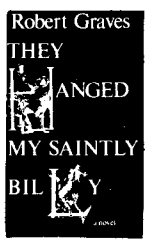

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She was referring to scenes she saw in 1917—of a kind she would never stop noticing until she died. But a decade or so later she would be putting the secular side of herself in a grave. She found herself, during the 1920s, lost, drifting, confused. She wanted more social and economic justice, but she felt an emptiness, a dreariness about her—and not least, an ironic self-importance, an arrogance, and devilish layers of conceit, even deceit in some of the very people (reformers, intellectuals) who scolded others for possessing those qualities. How to account for such a psychological, if not moral, state of affairs? How to reconcile the stated objectives of various political or social moralists—and the important intellectual sources they called upon every day in justification of their purposes—with the meanness of their manners, the downward slope of their involvements with one another? She faced the old dilemma of the abstract confronting the concrete, the glory of the transcendent message confronting the cheapness and coarseness of the immanent reality. "So much for theory," she exclaims at one point, near the end of her book; she had learned to be wary of people with highfalutin ideas, delivered in pretentious words. How did those individuals fare under the daily tests each life presents? How did she, as a matter of fact?

She was not beyond that last question, a very tough one. She spent decades of her life sinking such a line of inquiry to her rock-bottom self. In consequence she lived the "harsh and dreadful life" her beloved Dostoevsky described. Yet there was also an increasing joy, more than suggested in this autobiography. She loved "begging for Christ," loved saying goodbye to the "cautious, politic, meticulous" life of the conventional burgher:

> What a delightful thing it is to be boldly profligate, to ignore the price of coffee and go on serving the long line of destitute men who come to us, good coffee and the finest of bread.
>
> 'Nothing is too good for the poor,' our editor Tom Sullivan says, and he likes that aphorism especially when he is helping himself to something extra good.

She had a mix of innocence and guile in her—the biblical "serpents and doves." She could laugh at herself, even at her predicament, for all its seriousness. When she embraced Catholicism she had to end a common-law marriage with a scientist, an unyielding atheist. She had to endure, as well, the taunts of some of her radical companions, in whose eyes the movement "from Union Square to Rome," as she once described it, was a stupid, dead-end trip. She had to commit herself, a mother of a baby girl, to the only life she seemed anxious to live, for all its burdens: "I am a mother," she says at one point in the book, "and the mother of a very large family at that." She had in mind, of course, the Catholic Worker community, which would be where she spent just about all her years as a Catholic. Her meeting with Peter Maurin, an itinerant Christian in the tradition of the early church—he lived only to be of service to others—was fateful, and in her mind, utterly providential. Together they founded the *Catholic Worker*, a newspaper, and needless to say, much more: a whole tradition of working with the poor, and living alongside them, struggling on their behalf through word and deed alike.

Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day were "personalists"; were unwilling to come at the effort toward greater equality from on high: the wordy advocate's important pronouncements, coupled with a carefully gauged gesture or two. The Catholic Worker tradition is one of fervent localism, of hospitality houses, of farms and urban communities, of social protest and political engagement waged "from the bottom," of individual cultural commitment through lectures, reading, discussion. And basic to that tradition is a strange notion: those who try to "help" others are every bit as needy as the down-and-out men and women being "helped." Again and again I heard her say: "We are all in jeopardy, all hurt and ailing, if we only knew it."

Those were not the words of a silly, sentimental group therapist, intent on espousing safe, maudlin psychological pieties, proposed as philosophical universals. They were the observations of a Christian psychologist, in the tradition of Augustine, Pascal, St. John of the Cross, all of whom she mentions in her autobiography—the tradition of unyielding, candid introspection. She is extraordinary in her forthcoming honesty when she acknowledges the perils of her kind of life—the effect on her child of growing up amid the turmoil of the Bowery's poor, and the petty jealousies, envies, rivalries that don't stop short of a Catholic Worker hospitality house, where the poor are fed and clothed.

Still, for all the personal hazards, for all the recognitions she could not resist

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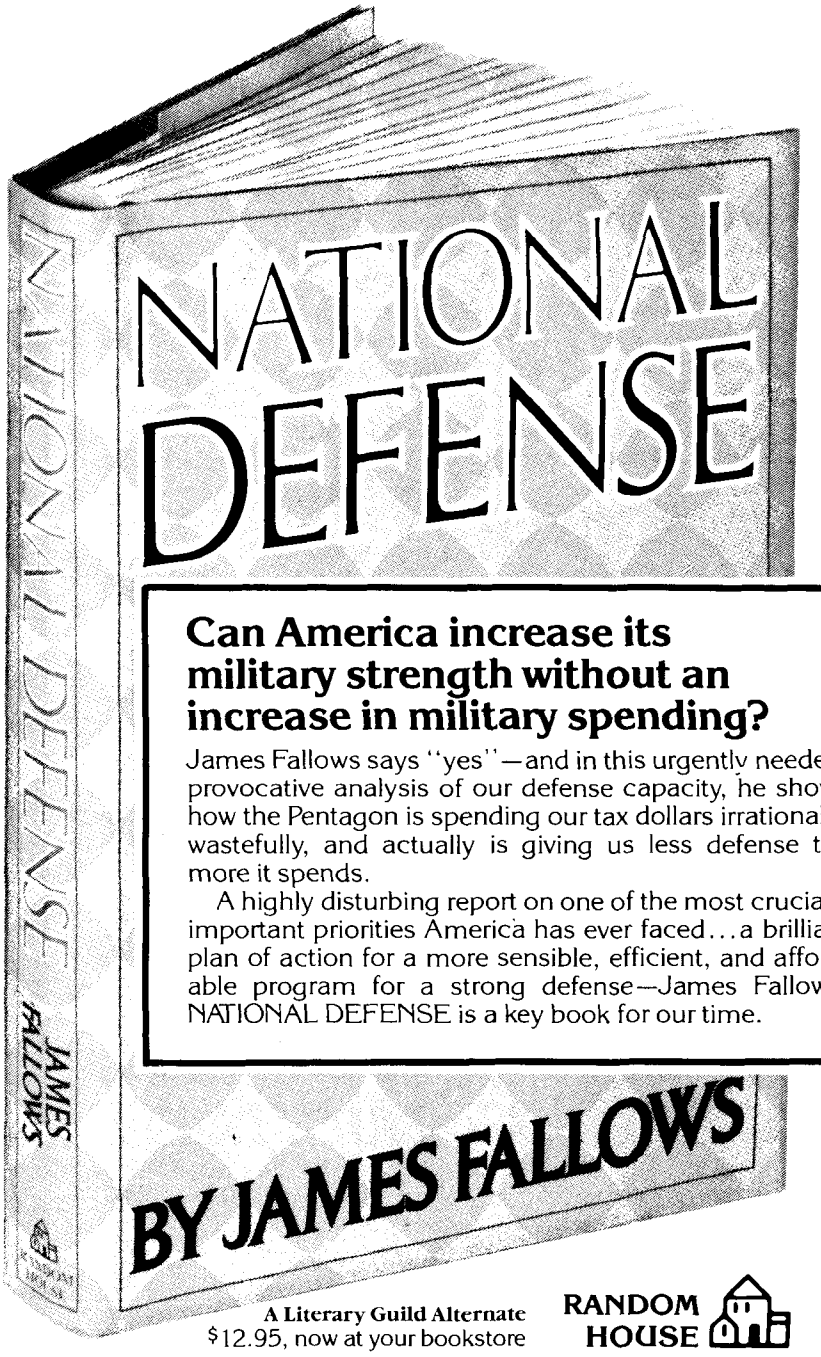
—the apprehension of stridency and manipulative egoism as a continual temptation to her own comrades, to herself—she had no choice, it seemed, but to stay a particular course. She didn't need to be told, in the 1960s, to put herself on the line. She had been on that line for decades; she died on that line. Nor did she require lecturing on what ought be said and done by women on their own behalf. *The Long Loneliness* is a spiritual autobiography, but it is also, without question, an important statement by an American woman who dared break conventions left and right; who took on, year after year, American business and American labor, American politicians, and, not least, American church people, including those who belonged to her own church. A convert, she embraced Christ's message so seriously that she could only try to heed it, not merely for an hour on Sunday, but every minute of her life. She was, in her own way, one of those women who always seemed near Christ, who drew His attention again and again, who watched Him attentively, mourned Him from the depths of their being, exulted in His wondrous, baffling victory.

"'All the way to heaven is heaven,'" she often said, quoting Catherine of Sienna; then she added the necessary explanation, the biblical "context," as we might put it: "For Jesus said, 'I am the Way.'" At this point one versed in American exceptionalism, in the twists and turns of New England transcendentalism, in the mind's nuanced exertions, might be sorely tempted to pull this unique American Christian woman, out of a fold (the urgent imperatives of a much cherished Catholicism) she ardently sought as her own, and put her instead in some secular philosophical and psychological niche. But she cared little, it seemed, what others made of her. She looked upward, sought His judgment. Certainly she was no symbol-monger, adept at explaining to skeptical 20th-century friends how "intuitive" a particular religious thinker or ritual is—how in keeping with *our* wisdom the prophets of Israel or Christ and His disciples can be regarded. For her there was, every day, the strange paradox to be lived: "We have all known the long loneliness," and yet, "those were beautiful days." In the latter instance she is describing the happiness the gospel brought her, as she attended its message and labored among hungry and badly hurt fellow human beings.

There was no resolving the contradiction of a deeply felt, lifelong loneliness and, simultaneously, a happiness that comes with efforts of charity gladly done as tangible expressions of prayer. But I remember her unqualified radiance as she conversed with Hannah Arendt at the University of Notre Dame in the spring of 1972—a stunning sight: two extraordinary women, each beautiful in the powerful wisdom of her old age, engaged in animated, intimate conversation. A priest whispered: "Incarnations of intelligent Goodness and good-spirited Intelligence." Then he added: "The sisters Mary and Martha of Bethany." When Hannah Arendt's husband died, she sent his clothes to the Catholic Worker on East First Street.

In a letter to me seven years ago, full of concern for my wife, then quite ill, Dorothy Day did not invoke fatuous enticements of possible recovery, given a thorough working of the rosary beads, but that strange blend of pain and wry amusement she conveyed in person: "How could we know hope if we had not known suffering?" She quickly dismissed the observation she had offered under the guise of a question as "no original 'mortal lesson.'" She was ever the humble correspondent, the obedient



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religious supplicant, the modest healer, the willing sharer of voluntary poverty: "floundering along," she kept putting it in *The Long Loneliness*, until, one hopes—hopes despite the agnostic doubt—that matter and time and space for an eagerly awaiting pilgrim dissolved, finally and recently, into Eternity.

Up the Greasy Pole

Governing America: An Insider's Report From the White House and the Cabinet by Joseph A. Califano, Jr.

(Simon & Schuster; $16.95)

We gather from Joseph A. Califano Jr.'s latest book, *Governing America: An Insider's Report From the White House and the Cabinet*, that he suspected right from the start that Jimmy Carter might be something of a turkey. As a candidate, Carter seemed to Califano to be "intensely shrewd" but overconfident, and his self-effacement seemed superficial. As president-elect, Carter and his closest advisers made Califano, formerly Lyndon Johnson's top domestic policy adviser and now the choice to become secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, uncomfortable. He disliked their displays of fundamentalist religion, their lack of depth and motivation, their propensity to act for public effect. During a December 1976 meeting at Hilton Head Island, Carter's plans for his cabinet struck Califano as "naive or disingenuous or both." He suppressed such doubts, however, and eagerly grasped the opportunity Carter offered him to prove that the Great Society programs he had helped Lyndon Johnson create could work. Califano's doubts soon corroded his ability to serve, however, eventually leading to active opposition to Carter's policies and proving the agent of his undoing. Thirty months later he was fired by a president who plainly distrusted him.

Califano thus missed the opportunity to become the George B. Cortelyou of his time. Cortelyou's is perhaps the first of a distinctive brand of success story in American government. The main character achieves high office not for any original contributions to society's stock of economic or intellectual capital or for independent political or administrative achievement, but for loyal service as special assistant, counselor, or aide-de-camp to powerful mentors, positions that give him the opportunity to parlay a small fund of borrowed power and a craving for prominence into a substantial financial and political stake of his own. Cortelyou (like Califano, from Brooklyn) came to Washington in 1891 as a clerk to the fourth assistant postmaster general and began, as one biographer explained, to "shoulder his way upward." Impeccably loyal, he soon became executive clerk in Grover Cleveland's White House and then an indispensable aide and adviser to William McKinley. In recognition, beginning in 1893 he was appointed, in succession, secretary of Commerce and Labor, postmaster general, and secretary of the Treasury by Theodore Roosevelt. Fortunately, he rose to these occasions—at one point Roosevelt considered him presidential material. George Cortelyou died a wealthy businessman.

We can only guess Jimmy Carter's first impressions of his ambitious, "exhilarated" new Cabinet officer. Joe Califano bid fair to become a pain in the ass. Only a few days into the Carter presidency, after reading newspaper accounts of White House unhappiness with his choice of Hale Champion as his undersecretary, Califano decided to confront the president, "blurting out" over the phone: "There's no need to talk to me through the newspapers. If you've got a problem . . . let me know." A few days later Califano was on the phone again, this time over his widely lampooned appointment of a chef at HEW: "I called him and offered to fire the chef if he was embarrassed about it." (Presidents love these kinds of calls.)

With this book Califano continues his harassment of the ex-president. Carter is portrayed as mean-spirited, duplicitous, non-committal, inflexible, petulant, ambivalent, brittle, and passive. Carter wavers under pressure, wilts in the heat of controversy, recoils from political opposition, and shrinks from defending his own proposals. Califano's principal expository device is incessant invidious comparison of Carter to Lyndon Johnson, whom Califano virtually worshiped. Johnson's passions, convictions, determination, and strength are invoked at every opportunity to make Carter look timorous and weak. It is easy sport. In recounting how Ted Kennedy lectured Carter on health insurance, for example, Califano tells us that "no one would have talked to Lyndon Johnson that way." Or "I never heard Carter speak privately with the burning conviction, much less the passion, of Lyndon Johnson about civil rights or race in America." Or "I thought to myself how much more limited Carter's strategic sense and vision were than Johnson's." As his administration is coming apart, Califano sees Carter as an Elmer Gantry, driven to exhort and preach, while remaining a hypocrite, unable to lead or inspire.

CARTER has, of course, already wounded Califano: the secretary who so loved his job was handed his head while still in his prime, and, insult upon injury, was then accused by the White House of lying when he said Carter had praised him as "the best Secretary of HEW." Califano's version of the story wins the verdict, but it was a sour ending nonetheless. In *Governing America*, as Califano thrashes through the thickets of issues he encountered as aide to Johnson and as secretary, we sense his wounded pride; it seems to account for the general temper of the book.

Califano's hyperactivity and self-absorption are palpable in his writing, and in person these qualities evidently grated on the tightly wrapped Carter. Hours before appearing on national television, for example, Califano telephones Carter to press for advice and guidance. He calls the Oval Office from Capitol Hill during a recess in testimony and pleads for answers to give his congressional interrogators. After laboriously outlining the profound inequities and political pitfalls of zero-cost welfare reform, Califano is openly stunned when a suspicious, "almost scowling" president refuses to believe what Califano instinctively accepts as common sense. Califano clearly feels that one acts when one must and that fuel for the presidency should come from burning conviction and passion,

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not the policy analysis (or "abstract themes and intellectual disputes," as he terms it) Carter evidently wanted. Califano, the political dervish, was clearly unable to find a common wavelength with the analytical, mistrustful, and inflexible president.

Califano ignores the possibility that his attitudes and style might have brought out the worst in Carter and his aides—such a possibility probably never occurred to him. In an inexplicable passage, Califano says that his relationship with Carter was characterized by mutual respect; recognition of each other's interests, strengths, and weaknesses; and a sense of trust. Yet they fought continuously over appointments—over Hale Champion's appointment and his later nomination as head of the Social Security Administration, over who should head HEW's Chicago regional office, over Califano's firing of David Sencer as Director of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, over Carter's withdrawal of Mike Smith's appointment as commissioner of education because of Black Caucus opposition, and over whether the number of women and minorities in the top echelons of Califano's department was adequate. The arguments were often over the president's prerogatives to approve Califano's choices in advance. Despite Carter's promise to consult the NEA "before making education appointments," for example, Califano says he made clear to NEA officials "my intention to make my own appointments." Moreover, Califano frequently went his own way in policy disputes. For example, brushing aside Califano's objections, Carter had directed him to propose a program of national academic achievement tests, whereupon Califano gave a speech in which he labeled proposals for federal testing programs "misguided" and a step in "precisely the wrong direction." Califano's quixotic anti-smoking crusade made the White House squirm, yet Carter's discomfort seemed only to quicken Califano's intensity on the subject.

Califano seemed as determined as Carter to have his way, as if his job were still to carry out Lyndon Johnson's mandate rather than Carter's. He was capable of employing subtle forms of sabotage. While testifying on the Department of Education proposal—which he ardently opposed—Califano casually mentioned that all Veterans Administration education programs, the National Science Foundation, and other

sacred cows were candidates for inclusion, instantly touching off congressional turf battles and forcing Hamilton Jordon to rush in to put out the fire. Shortly after the Three Mile Island incident, Califano, "deeply concerned about radiation effects and the lack of coordination on this subject within the government," testified that the accident might cause one more cancer death than was normal within a 50-mile radius, and the media leaped on the obvious implications. The president, who was on record as anxious to avoid undermining the future of nuclear power, "was incensed," Califano was told, and he was later the object of a dressing down. Califano, the political pyromaniac, required around-the-clock surveillance.

Though Califano does not intend this to be a book about Carter, it will be received as such. He wants us to understand that governing America means confronting issues that are at once deeply moral and intensely political: quicksand for the public executive. The book has several arresting episodes and moments that suffice to make his case. His accounts of the development of administration positions on welfare reform and national health insurance suggest how value laden and complex these issues are. Califano had to choose between releasing swine flu vaccine to check a possible epidemic, thus risking possibly fatal side effects of the vaccine, or not releasing the vaccine and risking the possibly fatal consequences of a flu outbreak. He had to decide whether or not to test laetrile, with some of his advisers arguing that such tests (which meant taking some patients off other medication) were unethical, and others arguing that failure to test it (and put an end to the debate) was also unethical. He had to break a deadlock between the Office for Civil Rights and the Chicago school board over how to desegregate the school system, with the reputation

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of HEW's civil rights enforcement program hanging in the balance. His emotional debate with an angry group of the Social Security program's high priests over perfectly sensible proposals to reduce the program's costs illustrates the obstacles facing agents of change.

IN THE END, however, the book is less revealing of the inherent difficulties of governing than of the personality of its author: a quick study, self-serving and self-absorbed, unreflective. He cannot resist personalizing every story: "I issued the criteria" for development of desegregation plans; "I issued proposed guidelines" for women's athletic programs; "We were clearly in a struggle for Carter's mind." Occasionally favored assistants are lauded for supporting roles, but the thousands of men and women whose personalities, responsibilities, and convictions give departmental management its character are scarcely evident in his book. The book's organization by subject—abortion, health, civil rights, welfare reform, education, and social security—rather than by chronology takes it further afield from managerial reality. While enabling Califano to provide didactic summaries of the facts and issues as he saw them, this organization conceals the incoherence of day-to-day governing and makes it appear as if Califano was able to give equal, single-minded, and orderly attention to each issue he faced.

He reveals little, moreover, about how he went about making up his mind in the face of disagreement and uncertainty. Califano wanted Carter to propose a comprehensive health insurance plan; other advisers claimed that national health insurance would be inflationary and, therefore, bad politics. Califano describes how he set about defeating these adversaries but not why. Were they wrong? If so, why? He doesn't say. Vice President Walter Mondale was deeply convinced, "substantively" and "on the merits" as well as politically, that Carter should propose a separate Department of Education. What were his substantive views? Why did Califano think him wrong? Again, he doesn't say. University of North Carolina president William Friday pleads to the point of exhaustion that HEW desegregation plans would harm more than help educational opportunities for blacks. Was there merit in this view? Califano doesn't say. Values and politics, he implies, are really the only factors in governing America; reasoned argument supported by evidence has little if any useful role.

His partisanship—on behalf of himself, Lyndon Johnson, and the Democratic party—at times verges on intellectual dishonesty. Califano tells us, for example, that the Nixon-Ford years were years of "no action" or retrogression across the board in HEW. Ignored

SOLOMON'S SWORD

Today, I walked down to the field
where they measure the wheat into sheaves,
and saw the boy bending over his sickle
harvesting with the others,
only the half of him showing,
his legs disappearing in the waist-high grain.
Twelve years since the night I was delivered of him,

and I lay back on my bed,
my body still hurting where he had torn it.
He was given to me. I was told what to do.
After I nursed him and they left,
he fell asleep on my bosom, his breath
sweet from the little I could give him.
Under his weight, I fell asleep
and dreamed my body was a huge stone wheel
turning against its adversaries,
laboring against the bodies
that worked so hard at pleasure
to rid themselves of pleasure.

When I woke, or dreamed that I woke,
I turned and found
his little body lay beneath me like a stone;
he made no cry at all.
I took my breast and nursed him,
his mouth filling up, his mouth
that demanded nothing, and the milk started
spilling across his cheeks,
into his nostrils, his open eyes,

and I thought, why should I not
share this abundance
with the infant sleeping in the next room,
his mother asleep beside him,
we three were alone in the house then.
The blade that had earlier worked on me
still lay on the moonlit table—

I carried him to her, he weighed no more
than he had when I earlier held him,
he was no heavier than hers—

and I replaced her baby with the dead one.
The next day, we stood before Solomon.
We laid the babies side by side on the floor.
In his wisdom, Solomon
should have slain the infant,
it would have been fair to cut it in half
and deliver me from my grief
a second time. It would have been fair
to divide the grief equally,
now that one has more and one has less.

Jane Shore

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or impugned in Califano's account are such salient developments during these years as the abrupt shift in budgetary priorities from national defense to social welfare programs and the positive steps taken toward desegregating southern schools. Califano also only marginally covers or takes no notice at all of Nixon's championing of welfare reform, the enactment of the Supplemental Security Income Program, and food stamp reform; the sustained attempt to restrain medical care prices, the enactment of a program to control drug cost reimbursements, initiation of a health maintenance organization program, and Nixon's two national health insurance proposals; and major reforms in higher education student aid and in the administration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Four men of honesty and integrity (two of them with outstanding executive ability)—Robert H. Finch, Elliot Richardson, Caspar W. Weinberger, and F. David Mathews—had wrestled tirelessly with the same problems Califano found so perplexing. Their prior efforts made possible many of Califano's successes. Califano's failure to acknowledge that he inherited an ongoing process of change—indeed, his belittling of his predecessors' efforts—undermines the veracity of this book as social history.

Governing America abounds in small but revealing inconsistencies. To inspire the demoralized career staff, Califano insists that ability be "the overriding characteristic" weighed in making appointments. Yet he lauds Champion's cold-blooded firing of the head of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, a man who had worked for Champion's causes in California, for the sin of serving the Nixon and Ford administrations. (He does not mention his similarly motivated sacking of Bertram A. Brown as head of the National Institute of Mental Health.) In 1978, he says, "we asked the medical schools to review their curricula and make some changes." Yet at another point, he complains of "the troubling tendency . . . in both the executive and the Congress, to set curriculum priorities from Washington." Asked by a congressional committee for his views on abortion, Califano hid behind the president and responded, "The same as Carter's." Yet later he complains that "whatever distance the President wanted from me on other policies . . . he held me at his side whenever he spoke of abortion. . . ."

Califano was cut short, perhaps only temporarily, in his pursuit of the Cortelyou record, but a longtime associate of his carries on. Alexander M. Haig is the current heir to Cortelyou. An aide-de-camp for a good part of his life, Haig, like Califano, had made his climb to the top from Robert McNamara's Pentagon. The indispensable, beguiling Haig also has been rewarded with a cabinet post, and it is clear that achieving it does not exhaust his ambitions. Ironically, diagraming Haig's plays during his most recent rush to prominence was Joe Califano, the Kennedy Democrat, Johnson disciple, and passionate advocate for social welfare programs, who shepherded Haig through his confirmation hearings. Why would Califano serve as political counsel to the right-wing Republican general who hates all his causes?

Califano and Haig have in common their ambition and the artesian processes by which they reached high office. Once there, both found it difficult to adjust to the pluralism of executive government in Washington, though Haig may recover from his rocky start. It may seem ironic that men schooled in subordination should make such poor subordinates, but perhaps it is not. Perhaps you don't suffer the indignities of being an aide for so long unless driven by an ambition little tempered by thoughtfulness or breadth or perspective. Personalities drawn to prolonged involvement in such roles may merely build up a voracious appetite for independent influence over great events that, once achieved, leads to unseemly political gluttony. Borrowed power is not real power, after all, and exercising it does not teach the same lessons. Working too long in the inner offices of the powerful may, indeed, teach the opposite of respect for our institutions. To a shrewd and ambitious person who has been in close, anything may seem possible.

Laurence E. Lynn Jr.

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To Make the Rubble Bounce

The Greatest Power on Earth: The International Race for Nuclear Supremacy by Ronald W. Clark

(Harper & Row; $12.95)

Ronald Clark did not intend his comparative history of nuclear bomb projects to be grimly fatalistic, but that is the impression it leaves on the reader. We seem a species of large ants, mechanically repeating specialized patterns of destructive behavior. "There is no ethical problem," C. P. Snow exclaimed in 1939, discussing the possibility of atomic bombs; "if the invention is not prevented by physical laws, it will certainly be carried out somewhere in the world." He could have been more precise: not somewhere in the world, but everywhere that human anthills have the appropriate mix of technical, political, and warrior specialists, more and more destructive nuclear weapons systems will be built.

A popular myth ascribes the initial A-bomb to the Nazi threat, or more precisely to the presence in the US of Jewish refugee scientists, whose unique combination of expertise and fear of Hitler generated a project that would not otherwise have emerged or succeeded. In historical fact, right after the 1939 discovery of nuclear fission, little groups of physicists in four different countries almost simultaneously sent secret memoranda to their governments urging atom bomb projects. Hitler's government got such memos from its "Aryan" physicists at the same time as the US and British governments were getting them not only from Jewish refugees but also from such natives as Vannevar Bush. And Stalin's government also got instant, automatic notification that its physicists were ready to provide it with nuclear bombs. If "ethics" means something more than the rules

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of the specialist's craft and unthinking devotion to my-country-right-or-wrong, Snow was right. No ethical problem of a broader sort was programed into the central nervous systems of the puzzle-solving scientists, the warrior class, and the politicians in charge.

Or almost none. A single sentence in one memo (Frisch and Peierls to the British government in 1940) deferentially called attention to a problem of conscience: "Owing to the spreading of radioactive substances with the wind, the bomb could probably not be used without killing large numbers of civilians, and this may make it unsuitable as a weapon for use by this country." In fact, the thought of killing large numbers of civilians was not a restraint then or since. It has been the main incentive to developing and using ever more destructive bombs, both "conventional" and nuclear, and democratic governments have persistently led dictatorships in this race. Comparative levels of ethical awareness seem irrelevant; only comparative levels of efficiency seem to distinguish the brown-shirted societies from the red or the red-white-and-blue.

PERHAPS the most dramatic exception occurred in the fall of 1949, when the USSR exploded its first A-bomb, and the US president asked a committee of scientific advisers about the possibility of a crash program for the H-bomb. For once the specialists recommended against an intensification of the nuclear arms race. Indeed, even after their memo had been brushed aside and the first hydrogen device was set to explode, Oppenheimer and a few other diehards came up with one last suggestion of restraint: notify the USSR that we have a hydrogen device but will not explode it so long as they don't explode theirs. Those exceptional specialists emphasized the calculation of strategic advantages and disadvantages in their futile pleas, but some ethical arguments occasionally broke through. Unfortunately Clark does not quote the most vivid, which Fermi and Rabi appended, as a sort of personal statement, to the memo of October 1949: "It is clear that the use of such a weapon cannot be justified on any ethical ground which gives a human being a certain individuality and dignity even if he happens to be a resident of an enemy country."

That, and the sentence in the Frisch-Peierls memo of 1940, are almost unique. If we set aside the ritualized handwringing that follows each major innovation in the nuclear arms race, if we examine the process leading to each great leap forward, we find almost no ethical deliberations among the technicians, warriors, and politicians who steadily excrete new "generations" of weapons and delivery systems. Of course they constantly repeat little formulas of rationalization: "Our faith in the sacredness of the individual human life justifies mass destruction of fiends that reject the faith." "The more people we are prepared to kill, the less likely that we'll have to kill them." "If we don't, they will." Such incantations put a moralistic gloss on arguments derived from realpolitik rather than anything we usually recognize as ethical principles. And that is where one discovers the most depressing fatalism in the nuclear arms race. Realpolitik is pseudorealism. Genuinely realistic calculations of long-run advantages and disadvantages are almost always brushed aside.

Consider the first case, Niels Bohr's 1944 effort to head off the nuclear arms race. Clark reveals that he had some support from Lord Cherwell, Churchill's chief science adviser, from Sir John Anderson, the man in charge of the British nuclear project, from Sir Henry Dale, head of the Royal Society, from Mackenzie King, the Canadian prime minister, and from General Smuts, the South African VIP. All of them suggested that the Russians be brought into some kind of negotiation for nuclear arms control *before* the A-bomb became a reality of war and international relations. After would be too late, they argued, for the Russians would have no other thought than to catch up, and the result would be "the most destructive competition in the world" (as Smuts put it), leading to "an armed world capable for the first time in history of reducing itself to a charred and poisonous rubble" (as Bohr put it). Those were not ethical arguments so much as realistic forecasts, but Churchill and Roosevelt brushed them aside. The ultimate weapon was about to confer limitless power on them, and they were being asked to forswear it in advance, to approach their likely chief postwar rival and offer to renounce an enormous advantage, in order to avoid a hypothetical danger in the long run.

REALPOLITIK—or shall we call it myopic power lust?—generated analogous behavior even among the closest allies. Listen to Ernest Bevin:

> No other Foreign Secretary should have to sit in front of the U.S. Foreign Secretary and be talked to as I have been talked to by Byrnes. . . . It shouldn't happen and the only way to stop it is to have the [nuclear bomb] plants in this country, with the Union Jack on top.

There are several such startling evidences of US-British friction in Ronald Clark's history, for he has mined British sources with special thoroughness, and puts heavy stress on "the failure of Anglo-U.S. collaboration." From it, almost as much as from the friction with the USSR, he derives "the growth in mistrust and suspicion that brought in the Cold War, the nuclear arms race, the economically crippling policy of peace through terror, and the threat of the plutonium society," not mention the increasing probability of nuclear war.

Surely Clark exaggerates the historical importance of US-British friction, but his exaggeration leads to an important insight. If allies as friendly as these two could not accommodate themselves to one getting the bomb while the other did not, one begins to comprehend the vicious logic that has dragged country after country into the nuclear arms race, and spurs the chief contestants to fantastic new levels of overkill. One begins to see how allies can be turned into enemies—as in the case of Soviet refusal to help China get its own bomb—and how every little international conflict can be raised to the level of a life-or-death confrontation.

A country may start with illusions of omnipotence, such as American and British leaders had in the 1940s. Or it may start with the wounded pride and the fear of a laggard. Either way the competitors are quickly trapped. If we are behind, we cannot negotiate a halt. If we are ahead, we may pretend to negotiate, but only on condition that

"WHAT HAS corrupted the media has been the mania for the exposé, the desire to appear 'in the know' about everyone else's corruption, from high officials to the society at large. They pretend to know when they only suspect, and they fail to question their own suspicions. Until 'Jimmy', they have too seldom suspected themselves. But seeing a colleague shamed and ruined can have a healthy effect on the conscience. We'll see."

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our lead is non-negotiable. Clark does not pursue the development of this mad logic to the present, now that perceptions of "ahead" and "behind" have become lunatic fantasies, which serve to repress recognition of the painful reality: each side can destroy the other many times over.

Clark has written a solid history of the first stages in the nuclear arms race. He is rather sketchy on the later stages, and has not struggled to discover the deepest causes of the accelerating madness. Indeed, he occasionally trivializes his awful subject by using sporting metaphors. For example, he opens his last page with the gambler's fallacy—"the more frequently the ball stops in a black, the greater the chance of red"—and ends with an image from football (or rugby): "We may well go on to fumble the last catch of all." The metaphor of the roulette wheel might have been apt, if he had imagined a phantasmagoric wheel constantly adding red slots, which really would increase the probability of a red at each successive spin. But football metaphors are grotesquely out of place in talk of the nuclear arms race. They suggest a human quality in the least human, the most mechanical behavior our species has ever displayed. Our only hope is to keep reminding ourselves that our central nervous systems have circuits which recognize ethical problems and calculate long-run advantages, that human beings have a kind of vision which is lacking in social insects.

David Joravsky

David Joravsky teaches history at Northwestern University and is the author of *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science, 1917-1932* (Columbia University Press).

The Cost of Alliances

Solvency: The Price of Survival
An Essay on American Foreign Policy
by James Chace

(Random House; $9.95)

In a brilliant book published nearly 40 years ago, *US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*, Walter Lippmann outlined his famous thesis that the fundamental principle of any foreign policy worthy of the name consists in bringing into balance, with a comfortable surplus of power in reserve, a nation's commitments and its power. He termed this condition "solvency," and he argued that where America had gone wrong was in allowing itself to become insolvent. His proposals for what to do about it are arguably out of date and certainly out of style. Yet as James Chace, the managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, reminds us in his important new book, Lippmann's concept still provides the key to an understanding of America's world position which we ignore at our peril.

Shield of the Republic, written in 1942-43, attacked American governments throughout the 20th century for failing to have a foreign policy. For Lippmann, a foreign policy consisted of making alliances with other powers, in order to deter or defeat any potential adversary. He wrote that "to be the member of a combination which can be depended upon to act together, and, when challenged, to fight together, is to have achieved the highest degree of security which is attainable in a world where there are many sovereign national states." As Lippmann saw it, America's successes from 1776 to 1900 were due to forming the right combinations; he maintained that even the War of Independence was won because of help from allies abroad. Conversely, American failures from 1900 onward were due to the lack of strong alliances to help the US defend its overextended global position.

In the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, the United States occupied the Philippine Islands, and in doing so moved the frontier it had to defend to the far side of the Pacific. The wisdom of the commitment was hotly debated, not only in the Senate, but in the presidential elections of 1900. Lippmann wrote that

> It is too late to debate it now. What cannot be gainsaid, however, is that the subsequent foreign policy of the United States has never been equal to the size of the commitment. From the day when Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila Bay until the day when General Wainwright surrendered Corregidor, the United States never made a sustained and prudent, or remotely adequate, effort to bring its obligations and its power into balance.

This was all the more true when the Royal Navy lost its supremacy, so that Britain no longer could be relied upon to defend our Atlantic frontier. We were exposed on both sides, and now had to take a stand on the far side of *both* oceans.

It was beyond the strength of the United States, in Lippmann's view, to defend by itself so large and vulnerable an area. True isolationism would have been to abandon the commitment; but those who called themselves isolationists wanted to keep the commitment without forming the alliances that would enable us to meet it. This was a policy not of isolation but of insolvency: of writing i.o.u.'s without having the funds to make payment when due.

The proper response would have been to forge the necessary alliances abroad; and if we had done so early enough, we would not, according to Lippmann, have been drawn into the two world wars, or if we had been drawn in, it would have been at a time more favorable to ourselves. Just as the key to winning World War II was the alliance with Great Britain and the USSR, so the key to winning the peace, he wrote, was to continue to maintain alliances with both of those countries.

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Lippmann's analysis was persuasive when it appeared, for in 1943 we were headed for a victory over Germany that was in large part due to the help of Britain and, above all, Russia. But once the war had been won, and the USSR emerged as our new adversary, Lippmann's prescription no longer worked; for there were no other countries that were still powerful enough that their help in opposing Russia would tilt the military balance in our favor. What the United States termed allies in the postwar world were, at least initially, clients and dependents. They did not contribute to our strength as much as we did to theirs. It became usual to refer to alliances as commitments, as though they were the same thing, so that Lippmann's theory that one must contract alliances in order to redeem commitments became unintelligible. For nearly four decades *US Foreign Policy*, though often quoted, has been a misunderstood book.

Lippmann had taught that if the wartime alliance with the USSR were to break down, China would not yet be powerful enough to redress the balance in our favor, and our only recourse would be to seek alliance with Germany and Japan, an alliance which could yield the results that Lippmann expected only if those countries were to remilitarize fully. It is at this point that James Chace, in his new book on what solvency means today, takes issue with him. Chace sees the full remilitarization of Germany and Japan as too dangerous. They should not be brought into service to be, in Lippmann's image, the shield protecting our republic; rather, we must keep providing the shield to protect them.

CHACE SAYS that we have to continue to meet this enormous commitment, and that we have to do so while meeting enormous but equally necessary social, economic, and political commitments within the United States. Like Lippmann, Chace tells us that the problem is that we don't have the means to make good on our pledges. Unlike Lippmann, Chace believes that we have to go out and create those means by ourselves.

The key to turning America around, he tells us, is reorganizing our finances and revitalizing our economy. In that sense it is paradoxically true that to counter the Soviet military threat what we have to do is reestablish the stability of the dollar. Although this is an essay on foreign policy, Chace discusses urban renewal, the problem of domestic lawlessness, the creation of a coherent national energy policy, the lowering of interest rates, an increase in the rate at which productivity rises, and a rebirth of American industry and technology, because the meeting of these challenges is necessary, in his view, if we are to have an effective world policy.

Chace's emphasis on solvency may seem in line with the Reagan administration, with its budget cutting, its rhetoric about living within our means, and its supply-side claims to increase productivity and wealth. But quite apart from the fact that Chace places strong emphasis on social issues too, many of which seem to have been neglected in the Reaganite drive to cut budgets, there is a difference in priorities. Chace puts reorganizing our finances first; the administration puts it second. The administration insists on an increase in the size of the defense budget as its absolute requirement, without questions asked as to whether we can afford it or how it will affect the rate of inflation. Chace's view is that it is an illusion to believe that military needs can come ahead of those of national finance or of the economy; if financial structures disintegrate or the economy weakens, a high military budget will not be sustainable.

In any event Chace does not see the strengthening of America's armed forces chiefly in terms of money. When the troops aren't literate enough to be able to maintain or operate expensive and sophisticated modern weaponry, surely the answer is not to supply them with weapons more complicated still. Chace's program for increasing the strength of the US armed forces is to reinstate the draft. Conscription, he says, will raise the quality of service personnel while reducing the wage-cost per soldier. The point about cost is a tricky one, but there can be little doubt that the armed forces won't be really effective again until their ranks are filled with those who are intelligent enough to graduate from high school and go on to college.

Politicians in and out of the administration probably are right in regarding reintroduction of the draft as politically impossible at the present time. But Chace's illuminating and eloquent essay makes it clear that political leaders must start fighting for programs regarded as politically impossible if they are serious about meeting our problems.

David Fromkin

David Fromkin is the author of *The Independence of Nations*, to be published by Praeger in September.

Three First Novels

Good Behaviour
by Molly Keane

(Knopf; $10.95)

Virgin with Child
by Tom McDonough

(Viking; $10.95)

American Dad
by Tama Janowitz

(Putnam's; $11.95)

Happy or sad, first novels generally end badly. Young writers set off into the outback of prose fiction, waving flags and blowing trumpets, and return, months or years later, feverish, impoverished, and tattered. In the interim, they have learned a sad truth: a first novel is easy for the writer to get into and fearfully hard to escape from. For the reader, alas, the opposite is true.

Molly Keane is not precisely a first novelist—she has published several "literary works" in England, according to her publisher. But *Good Behaviour* is

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her first American publication, and a felicitous debut it is. The book jacket also tells us that she is "a hunting woman in Anglo-Irish country society," and horses are much in evidence in the book. I have taken stabs both at fiction and at equitation, and have found them much alike—the novice tends to be dragged along with the beast, frightened, humiliated, and finally thrown. I've never seen Keane in the saddle, but in fiction she has what the horsy set calls "a natural seat." I read *Good Behaviour* in one sitting, and, when I'd finished, shook the book like a greedy child hoping one more goody would fall out.

Keane's characters are the impecunious Anglo-Irish gentry between the wars, and her central character is Aroon St. Charles, one of those poisonous unmarried female relations who infest every extended family. "The reason I enjoy other people's disasters is because they involve my understanding and sympathy in a way their successes never can," she tells us. "I like feeling genuine pity. Even when I know they are unworthy of my interest, I don't think I am ever ungenerous to friends more unlucky than myself."

But as Aroon recounts her path to manipulative spinsterhood, Keane performs the difficult trick of getting us inside this unattractive, overweight woman to see the naive but appealing girl she once was. Aroon is betrayed by her adored brother Hubert, who tricks her into her one pathetic love affair as a cover behind which he and her beloved can carry on their homosexual affair. She is betrayed by her mother, who regards her from birth as a rival for the love of the unfaithful Major St. Charles. She is betrayed by the father himself, who loves her but can never quite take seriously her hopes for love. When, at last, Aroon has her sticky revenge, the reader has come round to her side, and sadly agrees that she has made the very best of a bad bargain.

Keane writes beautifully, as when she describes the stag line at a 1920s hunt ball:

> The men were the flowers in these mysterious forests, sleek and orchidaceous in their hunt coats, the facings and collars pale, thin gold watch-chains crossing meagre stomachs, white ties as exact as two wings on a small bird's back, long legs black as cypripedium stems, hands sometimes gloved, eyes focussed distantly, as if a fox stealing away from its covert were still the thought in mind.

Keane is working the same social and literary territory that inspired Evelyn Waugh. Indeed, several characters in *Good Behaviour* might have wandered, in an absent-minded daze, out of *Vile Bodies*. But her formidable skills let her stay in the ring with an established master like Waugh, taking the jumps with ease.

Tom McDonough, a New York filmmaker writing his first novel, has more trouble staying in the saddle. *Virgin with Child* is an appealing book—a story of change and decay in the Catholic church of the 1960s. Father Jack Sullivan, a young priest exiled in Rajasthan by his bishop for antiwar agitation, is partially crippled in an auto accident. Back in "darkest Brooklyn," he finds his vocation dissolving in the conflicting currents of his political radicalism and his liturgical conservatism. But his big trouble is sex. Sullivan begins an affair with Sister Marian, a spunky Blessed Heart novice who plays the guitar and likes Martha and the Vandellas, but is distracted by a hopeless passion for Natalie Powers, the seductive Frenchwoman whose husband was driving the car in which Sullivan was maimed.

I liked much of this book. Like many first novelists, McDonough is at pains to write arresting phrases. The results are sometimes good (as when a tropical sun "popped up like a bubble and burst, full of chatter") and sometimes not (a parochial school student has "a face like a cartoon: curly red hair parted down the middle and a map full of freckles, serious as a prelapsarian shortstop"). But he has a sensitive touch with characters. I cared about Sullivan and Marian, and also about Peanuts, an altar boy who lives in a fantasy world and answers all questions with the name of his imaginary playmate, "Uruguay."

But McDonough ends the book in a blaze of blood and gunfire, senseless assassination and madness tying up all the loose ends of the plot. This has become a fashionable artistic ploy, sanctioned by cultural lions as disparate as Robert Altman and John Irving. It appears over and over in fiction, on television, and, of course, in real life. I've gotten tired of it, and I can't discern any deep statement here. It reeks, rather, of flagging invention, desperation to bring the story to a close. I was rooting for this book, and I felt let down.

American Dad let me down in the end too—and the beginning isn't prepossessing either. There is the aggressive

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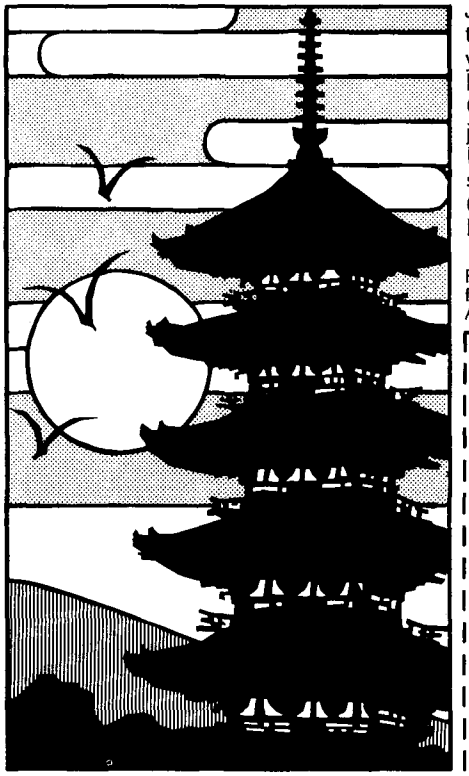

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pop title, and the jacket copy that blares, "Furiously funny, madly sad—a first novel from a very young writer." I also received a publicity packet that includes an interview with the author, 23-year-old Tama Janowitz, which begins, "Tama Janowitz does not want to talk about her relationship with Sid Vicious."

In a better world, author and publisher would feel confident that this book would find an audience without all this unseemly hugger-mugger. Whatever her dealings with the Sex Pistols, Tama Janowitz is an extremely gifted writer, and her book is built around a memorable and original portrait of an authentic American type, the monster shrink.

Robert Abraham Przepasniak, MD, is a kind of psychiatric Great Santini, "Paul Bunyan, Abraham Lincoln, Hunter S. Thompson rolled into one, dark and strict, red and angry, a living legend." He jettisons his dreamy wife Mavis and their two children, Earl and Bobo, for a life of sexual freedom; but he is unwilling to let them out of his enormous shadow. When Mavis, a novice poet, shows faint signs of independence, Przepasniak flies into a rage, assaults her, and accidentally kills her in the melee. Then, on furlough from prison, he maims himself in a chain-saw accident.

There is not a false note in the presentation of this engaging villain. His intellectual but brutal appearance, his obsession with strength, his self-righteousness and manipulation, blend convincingly with a constant self-pity.

> 'I was an only child,' he tells Earl, the book's narrator. 'I used to pretend to have friends, but even my pretend friends did not behave the way I wanted them to. . . . Sometimes I don't know who I'm supposed to be. Your father? Your brother? Your friend? I can't be anybody's father because I don't feel old enough. Just who am I, would you tell me?'

Janowitz has a sharp eye for the things of this world—the moldering contents of Przepasniak's refrigerator, the moldy old book Mavis collects, the flowers and trees on the family farm—and her sensuous writing enlivens the book. She also has a precocious satirical eye for literary humbug. Mavis's poems are "about Americans in the 1970s, strange, queer characters my mother imagined the United States was peopled with. There were men who fed flies to Venus Fly Traps, mailmen in the shape of fish who nibbled on letters they refused to deliver. Fat men, tumescent cake-eaters, babies with dandruff."

But Dr. Przepasniak is offstage by page 137, and Earl takes over. Earl is a sorry fellow—a characterization he would not dispute. "I had turned out to be a drab, beaverish person with large nostrils, full of desires but lacking ambition," he explains. He rampages ignorantly around England and France, spouting dubious aphorisms ("Queer as bats, was all I could think about the French"). He also undergoes a half-hearted sexual initiation with Emma and Elmira, two London demimondaines who might easily live next door to Johnny Rotten. This part of the book is thin gruel, though portentously presented:

> These are a young man's experiences in the world of sense and sensuousness that are, in their way, sacred and religious rituals of the highest order, a 'coming of age' by an American in England, food for thought for anthropologists in every land and climate, opening the publishing doors for many volumes of photographs, footnotes, explications, bibliographies and jobs for the masses of young would-be sociologists and paleontologists.

Earl may take all this seriously, but I couldn't. It wasn't exactly funny, either, and I began yearning for the stylish villainy of Poppa Przepasniak. Earl's adventures are mostly filler, marring what is otherwise one of the most impressive first novels I've read in a long time.

Garrett Epps

Garrett Epps is the author of *The Shad Treatment* (Putnam's).

Correspondence, *from page 7*

party used to choose its leadership.

The parliamentary leaders will be the government once the Labour party leaves the opposition benches. To deny the general membership a direct voice in their selection would be equivalent to abolishing the American primary system in favor of allowing the congressional party caucuses to decide the candidates for government office.

"Other so-called democratizing steps . . . ," including the establishment of the Labour party's program at the annual party congress, compel the Labour party's leadership to remain responsive to the wishes of the entire party. It is a democratic means of holding the party's leaders accountable.

If it is the influence of the Trade Union Conference that alarms Kondracke, he should remember that the British Labour party traditionally has accepted and encouraged a tripartite division among the parliamentary party, general membership, and the TUC. The Labour party is very much dependent upon the support of the TUC.

If Kondracke wishes to continue launching salvos at less than democratic policies, then I suggest he gaze upon the Social Democrats. It was the Social Democrats who left the Labour party, ostensibly over such policies. Dr. David Owen and the other members of "the gang of four" would have preferred that the Parliamentary Labour party dictate to the party as a whole the choices for party leadership. I ask you, now, is that democratic?

Glenn E. Mitchell II
Wayland, Michigan

Satirical gem

To the editors:

My thanks and congratulations to Michael Kinsley for his capsule version of the *Post*'s ombudsman report on the Janet Cooke affair ("The Best of Posts, The Worsts of Posts," *TNR*, May 2). From time to time *TNR* provides a satirical gem; Kinsley's piece was one of the most provocative in some time. I, unfortunately, do not see the *Post* out here. Kinsley's reminder makes the loss seem less serious.

Douglas C. Greene
Foreign Service Officer
Beirut, Lebanon

Anti-Celticism

To the editors:

In the past Jack Beatty wrote an excellent article on Northern Ireland ("The Troubles Today," *TNR*, November 15, 1980). It is a disappointment to see in an otherwise perceptive piece ("Out of the Maze," *TNR*, May 9) that he relies upon the simplistic English vocabulary about Protestants and Catholics, terrorism and crime, and suicides and British citizens.

Ireland was England's first colony. It will be her last. This has been said countless times before. Bobby Sands's ultimate sacrifice and love for his fellow countrymen's desire for freedom from colonial domination proves it. But this

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does not say anything about why Bobby Sands died. Or why three of his fellow dissidents are still on hunger strikes at this writing. Margaret Thatcher refuses to budge. Why?

The Irish have suffered more than any other people on the face of this earth. The Irish survived centuries of English extermination, from the Cromwellian genocide of the 16th century to the potato genocide of the 19th century. What was behind the estimated deaths of nine million men, women, and children? Does it have anything to do with Thatcher's refusal to budge on the political status question?

A few years ago on a visit to Northern Ireland I heard Margaret Thatcher, as head of the opposition party in Britain, tell the Loyalist community that if she was elected prime minister, they could do as they please de facto. I submit that the lady who took voice lessons at Cambridge to sound like a member of the English upper class also inherited centuries of what I call anti-Celticism. An opportunity to bring peace, justice, and freedom to the homeland of the Irish people, both Nationalist and Loyalist, will exist only when this anti-Celticism is identified in England and other parts of the world.

Raymond Quinn
Bronx, New York

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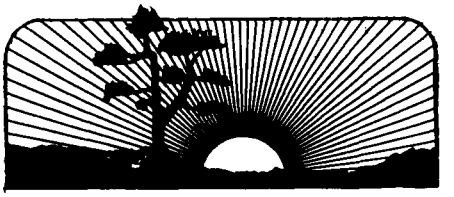

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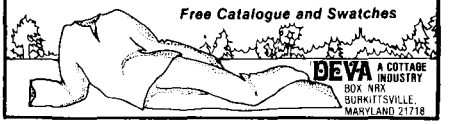

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California Diarist

Indiscretions

Michael Reagan is indiscreet. Last month, while the Los Angeles County district attorney was looking into allegations that the president's elder son was involved in a stock swindle, a name-dropping letter that Michael wrote to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma found its way into print. "I know that, with my father's leadership at the White House, this countries [sic] armed services are going to be rebuilt and strengthened," the letter said. At this point, the procurement officer at Tinker Air Force Base was supposed to pause from his reading and ask himself: How does Michael know this? And what can I do to encourage this good trend? "We at Dana Ingalls Profile," came the clincher, "want to be involved in that process." All this is reminiscent of Billy Carter's bumbling, mostly unauthorized influence-peddling, but there are differences between Billygate and Michaelgate. Michael lacks the ingenuous amiability that disguised Billy's opportunism. Until last summer the press was so charmed by Billy's good ole boyishness that it was willing to ignore the question of whether he was taking cash from Libyans. Not until the eve of Jimmy Carter's contested renomination did the investigative juices really start flowing. Michael has not been granted the same grace period, because he's got a nasty temper. "I'm tired of having to explain," he snapped at a *New York Times* reporter on May 16. "I'd just like to know what the press expects me to do. You tell me, what job can I do?" Perhaps if Michael weren't so stupidly unrepentant his persecutors would leave him alone. On May 20, the day he resigned from Dana Ingalls, he told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I've read and reread the statement I made in that letter and I'd write it again." He was resigning only because he felt that to fail to do so might hurt the company's chances of getting contracts for the B-1 bomber. Michael also told the *L.A. Times*, "I've never tried to use my father's name." He should reread that letter one more time.

The Michael Reagan incident was depressingly small-time, but this administration seems to favor an alderman-like approach. Last March, when Buddy Ebsen was appearing in a Los Angeles musical called, fittingly, *Turn to the Right*, the president himself called Dan Sullivan, drama critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, and asked him to give his old Hollywood pal's show a boost. To his credit, Sullivan took this opportunity to do some ward-heeling of his own, lecturing the president about the bad effects his budget cuts would have on the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. Then he wrote the whole thing up for the *Times*. It was a great day for the L.A. paper, and it may have gone a long way toward erasing the embarrassing unofficial statement of arts-criticism policy once made by a more affable *Times* critic, Charles Champlin. "Remember," Champlin is said to have told a young applicant for the position of *Times* television critic, "you have to have dinner with these people."

Champlin may simply have meant that a writer must be respectful of his environment. Edward R. Murrow made that point when he said that a reporter who could not return to a place he wrote about wasn't a good reporter—a sobering thought for a Californian writing about California. (Although I was born somewhere else, and I don't live here now, I consider myself a Californian. Indeed, there are some sociological and literary circles that would define the non-native, displaced Californian as the most authentic Californian of all.) Murrow's words are not applicable to senators. When a senator does a bad job, he has to come home. That will probably be the fate of S. I. Hayakawa, the one-time linguist who made his name as an advocate of silence while president of San Francisco State University. Hayakawa has been somewhat misunderstood by the press; his indifference is often mistaken for ignorance, and many of his more ridiculous public statements have not been recognized as weak attempts at humor. During the gasoline shortage in the summer of 1979, Hayakawa was widely quoted as saying that high prices wouldn't be a burden to the poor because the poor don't drive as much as the rich. What about farmers, his detractors asked indignantly, and what about the commuters of L.A., the poorest of whom often travel the farthest? Well, of course. Hayakawa must know about such people, must know that ignoring their plight is political suicide, so he must have been making a little joke. But little jokes can be political suicide, too, especially when they aren't funny. Now practically every politician in California is lined up to take Hayakawa's Senate chair away from him. Among the Republican contenders are Barry Goldwater Jr., congressman from Los Angeles and son of the Arizona senator, and Maureen Reagan, resident of Los Angeles and daughter of the president. The most piquant Democratic challenger is Gore Vidal, who, like Reagan and Goldwater, learned politics at the knee of a famous relative—his grandfather, the late Senator Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma. Vidal did run for office once before, but in New York, not California. Back in 1960, in Dutchess County, he ran for Congress as a Democrat-Liberal. Vidal will be hurt by his dual residency (he spends a good part of every year in Italy) and by the popular, and probably accurate, notion that literary people don't take politics seriously enough to hold even municipal office (as evidenced by Norman Mailer's 1969 bid for mayor of New York). He will also be hurt by the fact that Jerry Brown wants the seat too.

By the time this column appears, the month-and-a-half-old Writers Guild Strike may be over. Hollywood's film and television writers are trying to get the same cable-TV royalties that the Screen Actors Guild won in its strike last fall. The Directors Guild may go on strike over the same issue at the end of June. Hollywood is a veritable Gdańsk, but morale among most of the strikers I know is very low. One of them grumbles that the richest members of the guild are the most eager to continue the strike, most able to withstand long periods of unemployment, and most likely to benefit from the royalty agreement. He told me that a woman stood up at one strike meeting and announced that she wanted her comrades to know just how much she was giving up to go on strike. "I'm the head writer for a soap opera," she said, "and I make $20,000 a week." I won't hazard an estimate about how many penetrating political columns $20,000 would buy. Suffice it to say it would buy a lot. I'd be more specific, but I have to have dinner with these people.

T. N.

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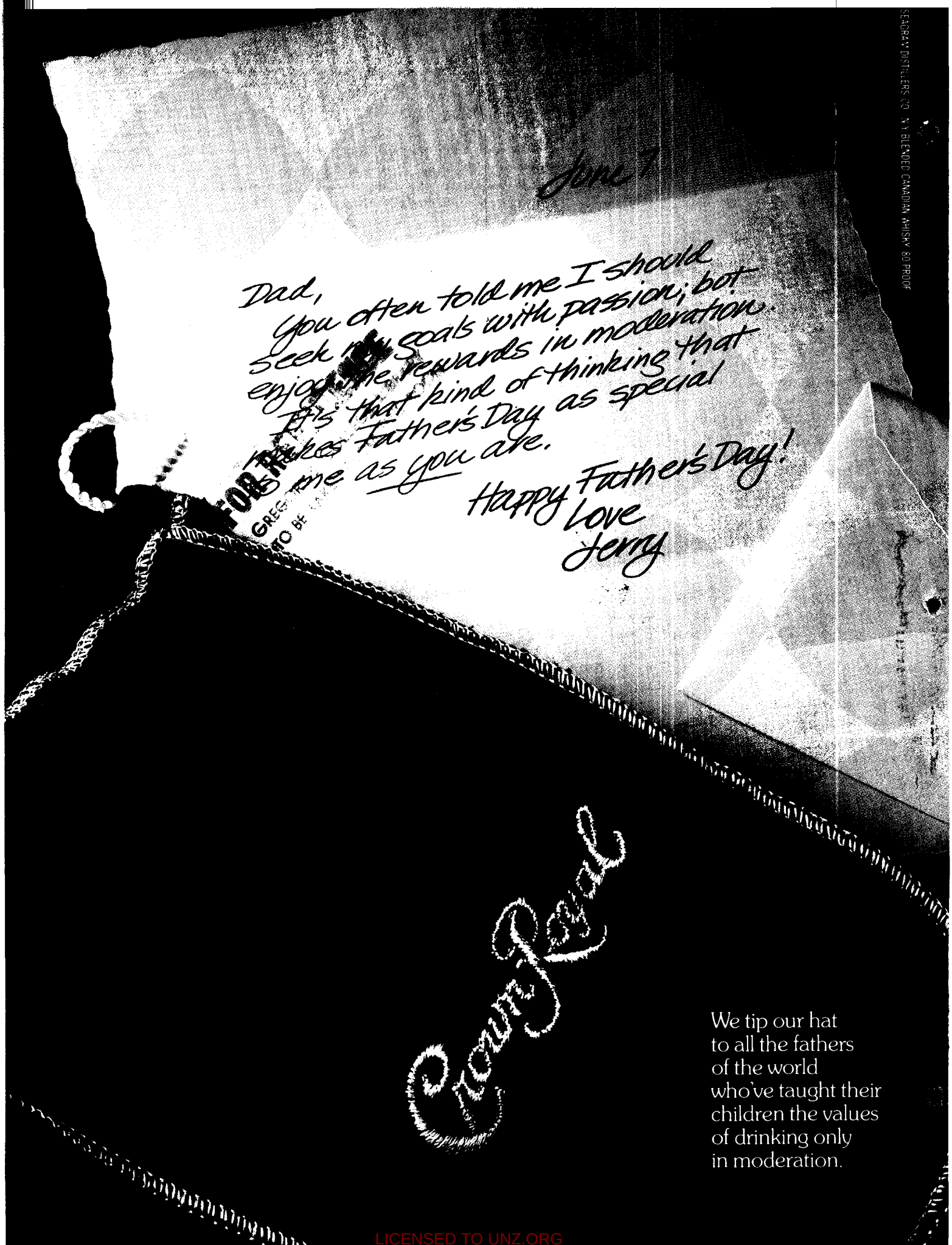

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